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Bilād al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid conquest to the fall of the Ayyūbids (359 658/970 1260)

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The geo-political background

The old divisions of *ajnād* or military government created by the Umayyads and completed by the 'Abbāsids were still being used in the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century by the Aleppan writer 'Izz al Dīn ibn Shaddād to describe Bilād al Shām: these were Jordan, Palestine, Damascus, Ḥimṣ and Qinnasrīn.¹ The border areas, called "awāṣim", between Antioch and Samosata formed the northern limit of this area, a border which changed over the centuries. The Euphrates was, in theory, the eastern border, but from the fourth/tenth to the seventh/thirteenth century, northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia (Jazīra) remained closely linked. Politically the two areas were often under the same power or different branches of the same family, while, economically, a highly important trade route linked Baghdad to the Mediterranean through the Euphrates valley to Aleppo and then Antioch. Other routes went from Mosul to Aleppo passing through the western part of Upper Mesopotamia.

Southern Syria and Palestine were also linked to Baghdad by the Euphrates route as far as Raḥba, then across the steppe to Palmyra, Damascus and the Palestinian coast. Damascus was closely linked to Egypt by the Mediterranean coast and the south of Palestine. When the settlement of the Franks in this area made this route difficult, it was temporarily replaced by the Sinai route, allowing access from Syria to Egypt via Transjordan. Bilād al Shām therefore extended on the coast as far as al 'Arīsh on the Egyptian border, while inland Ayla on the Red Sea was usually considered to be its furthest limit.

All this area was geographically diverse with, from the west to the east, the coast and its fortified ports, the double chain of mountains and its depressions, and finally the area where the arid steppe meets the large cities of the interior (Damascus, Ḥimṣ, Hama, Aleppo). This geographical variety often explained

the different kinds of political development. At times the ports fulfilled the role of border points or commercial hubs open on to the Mediterranean. This was where Fāṭimid domination lasted longest. Then, in the first half of the sixth/twelfth century, this same coastal fringe, easily accessible to Crusader reinforcements, was to become the most resistant nucleus of the Latin states. The mountains, which were more inaccessible, attracted Christian and Muslim ascetics. Throughout the fifth/eleventh century to the seventh/thirteenth they were a place of refuge for groups such as Maronites, Druzes and Ismāʿīlīs, who guarded their independence, and who were at times rebellious. The cities in the interior and the steppe, for their part, battled to retain their autonomy. They avoided occupation by the Franks, and remained open to Iraq and Mesopotamia, the source of armed reinforcements and commercial goods.

From the beginning of the Fāṭimid domination to the fall of the Ayyūbids, Bilād al Shām was never controlled by one single political power. Whereas the Fāṭimids dominated southern Syria, Palestine and the coast as far as Tripoli from the end of the fourth/tenth to the end of the fifth/eleventh century, Fāṭimids, Byzantines and Mirdāsids were locked in a struggle for power in northern Syria. From 463/1071 the Saljuq Turks held a large part of Syria, but never managed to establish themselves long term on the coast and in Palestine. Jerusalem changed hands between the Saljuqs and the Fāṭimids, whereas the main ports on the coast remained theoretically under Fāṭimid domination until the beginning of Frankish rule. The latter, who moved into the area from 491/1098, radically changed the political map of the region. Bilād al Shām was divided into three parts of varying importance. The Saljuqs and their epigones held on to the great cities of the interior; the Fāṭimids held on to Tyre and Ascalon only, and had to relinquish them to the Franks in 518/1124 and 548/1153; at the height of their power, the Franks controlled the territories to the north and north east of Aleppo, on both sides of the Euphrates, and all of the coastal cities from Antioch to Gaza, Palestine and Transjordan as far as Ayla. From the middle of the sixth/twelfth century onwards, the Franks lost more and more of their territories, first to the Zangids and then to Saladin, until by the end of the century all they controlled was a slim coastal strip from Antioch to Ascalon.

The population of this area reflected both its ancient heritage and the various migrations accompanying the Byzantine, Fāṭimid and Saljuq conquests. The descendants of the Syrian populations prior to the first/seventh century and those of the Arab conquerors had often mixed over time and it was not always easy to distinguish them. The Arabs were still dominant amongst the Bedouins who still led a nomadic or semi nomadic lifestyle: the

Banū Kilāb in northern Syria played a vital political role in the fifth/eleventh century; the Banū 'Uqayl, who had a great influence in the middle of the fourth/tenth century in central and southern Syria and in the Jordan valley, then disappeared from these areas to regroup in northern Syria and Jazīra; the Banū Kalb, settled between Palmyra and Ḥimṣ in the fourth/tenth century, were also present in the oasis of Damascus and the Ḥawrān plain a century later; the Banū Ṭayy, to whom belonged the influential Banū 'l Jarrāḥ family, were numerous in Palestine. The inhabitants had mixed feelings towards these Bedouins: they accused them of brigandage and treachery, but often called upon them to run their cities, fight alongside them, lead them into the desert or sell them livestock.

Berbers arrived with the Fāṭimids. They were associated with the armies they fought in and were generally fairly poorly accepted by the inhabitants. Westerners (Maghāriba from North Africa and al Andalus) who left their country to settle in Syria in the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, pushed out by the Christian Reconquista or simply attracted by the intellectual life of the cities of the Near East which they passed through on their pilgrimage route, were a different story. Mainly holy men and scholars, they contributed actively to the cultural and religious life of the Syrian cities. Even more numerous were the Kurds and Turks who moved into Syria from the fifth/eleventh century under cover of the Saljuq invasion, and particularly in the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries. In northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia there were many Armenian Christians, who had arrived either in the wake of the Byzantine conquests at the end of the fourth/tenth century, or following Philaretos, a Byzantine general of Armenian origin, who governed the Amanus region independently in around 1078. The Saljuq invasion of Greater Armenia in 456/1064 also caused many Armenians to go into exile in the northern Syria area and above all in Cilicia. Finally a small colony of Armenians had settled in the fifth/eleventh century in Jerusalem where they still had a bishop in the sixth/twelfth century. The Franks were to enjoy significant support from all these groups of Armenians.

There were a small number of Nestorians in Damascus and Aleppo until they disappeared from Syria in the sixth/twelfth century. The Maronites were still living in the mountains of Lebanon, but there were many more Melkites and Jacobites. The fact that they lost many of their bishoprics in the fourth/tenth century did not stop them from continuing to play an important role in the Syrian administration until the end of the fifth/eleventh century and the Mirdāsids employed several Christian viziers. But at the time of the Crusades the Christian communities living in Muslim territory saw their situation

deteriorate progressively and the existence of the Latin states had much to do with this. Sometimes suspected of complicity with the Franks and subject to reprisals following violence towards Muslims, the Christians were also victims of the strong Sunnī reactions of the sovereigns who, like Nūr al Dīn or Saladin, wished to apply religious law more strictly, and particularly the regulations concerning the Christians and the Jews. In spite of these crises, however, they were able to live in relative peace until the end of the Ayyūbid period. The arrival of the Mamlūks, on the other hand, was to mark the beginning of a much more difficult period for them.

There have been many studies on the sources available for this period, and it will suffice here to refer to them.² Not many archives have come down to us, apart from a few decrees, diplomas, legal certificates and various items of correspondence.³ The famous documents from the Geniza in Cairo, which provide so much information on Egypt and the medieval Mediterranean, contain scattered information on Syria Palestine, particularly on the coastal ports.⁴ Documents have also been discovered in the Great Mosque in Damascus, now kept in Istanbul, of both a public and a private nature, and are still in the process of being published.⁵ Local searches and new archaeological digs (including under the sea in some coastal ports) regularly provide their share of archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic discoveries.⁶ At present, however, it is largely narrative sources, of which a great many have survived, that provide most of our knowledge about medieval Bilād al Shām: universal chronicles, dynastic and regional histories, biographical dictionaries, accounts of journeys and geographical works, legal, administrative, political and religious treatises. Most of these were written by Muslim authors, but Christian sources have also come down to us in Arabic, Syriac or Armenian, not to mention the numerous Latin sources covering the period of the Crusades.

The Fāṭimids in Syria-Palestine: a struggle for domination

Fāṭimid domination in Damascus lasted a little over a hundred years, from 359/970 to 468/1076. In Aleppo, where the Fāṭimids were confronted by the Byzantines, they only managed to gain control in 406/1016, and sustained their domination for less than fifty years. Throughout Bilād al Shām they came up against numerous Arab tribes who allied themselves by turn with the Egyptians or their enemies, according to their interests, much of the time resorting to banditry and the pillage of caravans. There was, however, an

important difference distinguishing the Arab tribes of northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia from those in southern Syria and Palestine. The former tried to establish states which respected the traditional Islamic institutions (for example the Banū Numayr in Ḥarrān and Edessa, the 'Uqaylids in Mosul and especially the Mirdāsids in Aleppo) whereas the latter, who included the Banū 'l Jarrāḥ from the tribe of the Banū Ṭayy, were drawn more into pillage and plunder than administration.

From 359/970 to the end of the reign of al-'Azīz in 386/996

The conquest of Syria Palestine was difficult from the start. Yet it was a divided country. Southern Syria was under the control of a governor representing the small Egyptian dynasty of the Ikhshīdids (323 58/935 69), and northern Syria was still under the domination of the Ḥamdānids (332 94/944 1004). The death of the prince of Aleppo, Sayf al Dawla, in 356/967, the weakness of his successors and the disappearance of the Ikhshīdids, swept away by the Fāṭimids, had weakened Syria which was from that time onwards eyed as much by the Byzantines from the north as by the Arab tribes and the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn in the south. The intervention of the latter, the weaknesses of the Egyptian army and probably a lack of preparation go a long way to explain the difficulties for the Fāṭimid conquest. In 359/969f. a first expedition commanded by Ja'far ibn Falāḥ succeeded in seizing Ramla, Tiberias and Damascus. But the Ikhshīdid governor of Damascus called upon the Qarmaṭīs, supported by the Būyids of Baghdad, who took on Ja'far and killed him in 360/971. In 363/974 a second expedition was sent to Syria but the Fāṭimids were unable to establish a lasting presence in Damascus, which was finally given up to a Turkish adventurer called Alptegin in 364/975.

The Fāṭimids, then, did not only meet resistance on religious grounds. The peoples of southern Syria and Palestine were indeed mainly Sunnī, as was the Ikhshīdid governor, but their Qarmaṭī allies were descended from the same Ismā'īlī family as the Fāṭimids, and the Būyids who supported them were Twelver Shī'īs who recognised the authority of the Sunnī caliph of Baghdad. Rather than reflecting ideological opposition, Syrian resistance was a political conflict between an Arab and Persian east and an Arab and Berber North Africa, between well established local militias and an army seen as foreign.

Damascus and Palestine were nonetheless of great importance for the Fāṭimids. Even though hopes of using them as a base for the conquest of Iraq were gradually dwindling, control of this area remained no less essential to hold back the expansion of the Byzantines towards the south and to counter any attack from the east. Nor were they lacking in economic resources. For this

reason, the caliph al 'Azīz (365/86–975/96), advised by his powerful Jewish vizier, a convert to Islam named Ya'qūb ibn Killis (d. 380/991), was very interested in this region. His vizier's recommendations reveal in outline Fāṭimid policy at this time: do not take action against the Byzantines as long as they do not attack, settle for a declaration of vassalage from the Ḥamdānids in northern Syria, and do not spare the Arab tribes in Palestine. In southern Syria, al 'Azīz's troops succeeded in taking back Damascus in 368/978 from Alptegin, a Turkish governor who had taken power there, but none of the Fāṭimid governors was able to bring order to the area.

In northern Syria, the Fāṭimids encountered even greater difficulties, coming up against the resistance of the Ḥamdānids of Aleppo and particularly from their Byzantine protectors. The latter had begun their great offensive in northern Syria in the middle of the fourth/tenth century and were trying to regain control of the lands lost more than three centuries before. From 351/962 to 371/981, they led several expeditions against northern Syria. They pillaged Aleppo in 351/962 and took Antioch in 358/969. The treaty and tribute they imposed on Aleppo had serious economic consequences for the whole area and all the Fāṭimid expeditions failed to make them withdraw.

So by the death of the caliph al 'Azīz in 386/996, the Fāṭimids had succeeded in maintaining their domination in Syria as far as Tripoli, which had resisted all the Byzantine attacks, but inland they still had not taken Syria north of Ḥims. All their attempts in that area had met with the resistance of the Ḥamdānids, who, in spite of their Twelver Shī'ī beliefs, seemed to prefer the Byzantine protectorate to Egyptian domination.

From the accession of al-Ḥakim to the death of al-Zahir
(386/427–996/1036)

The first fifteen years of the reign of al Ḥakim were marked in southern Syria and Palestine by several revolts by the urban populations and the Arab tribes. The conflict was no doubt inflamed by the internal divisions which arose in Egypt following the death of al 'Azīz, between Orientals, led by Barjawān the tutor of the young caliph, and the Berbers under the command of Ibn 'Ammār, who each wished to install a governor from their side in Damascus. The chiefs of the Damascene militias exploited this to take power in 387/997, but in the following year they were all arrested and exterminated by the new commander in chief of the Fāṭimid army in Syria, Jaysh ibn al Ṣamṣāma. This fierce repression put the activities of the urban militias on hold for more than twenty years and led the Damascenes to say that the death of Jaysh soon afterwards was a punishment from God.

In Tyre too, the Fāṭimid troops came up against the hostility of the disinherited population. In 388/998, the poor of the city and the *aḥdāth*, led by a sailor by the name of 'Allāqa, massacred all the Fāṭimid troops in the city. The rebels called for help from the Byzantines, who sent a squadron, but in vain. 'Allāqa was defeated and sent to Cairo, where he was flayed alive, and a new governor of Tyre was appointed.

In the early years of the fifth/eleventh century, Damascus had a series of Fāṭimid governors who were dismissed almost as soon as they were appointed by a caliph who feared above all that they would take too much power. From 392/1002 to 401/1011 there were about a dozen. In Palestine between 401/1011 and 404/1013, the Fāṭimid army had to face a large scale revolt by the Banū 'l Jarrāḥ Arabs and their chief Mufarrij ibn al Jarrāḥ. In 401/1011, the latter had the Fāṭimid governor of Tiberias and Ramla captured and decapitated, and pillaged Palestine with his men. He even attempted to install an anti caliph in the shape of the Ḥasanid *amīr* of Mecca, Abū 'l Futūḥ al Ḥasan ibn Ja'far. Al Ḥākim recovered the situation by dividing his enemies. The revolt had lasted two years, but it ended in the Fāṭimids' favour.

The reign of al Ḥākim also marked the beginning of Fāṭimid domination in northern Syria. In 399/1008, the death of Lu'lu', regent of Aleppo, who had rid himself of the Ḥamdānids in 394/1004, opened a new period of instability in northern Syria during which power was disputed between his son, al Manṣūr, and the Arabs from the Banū Kilāb tribe, led by Ṣāliḥ ibn Mirdās, founder of the future dynasty of the Mirdāsids. Al Manṣūr, defeated by the Arabs, took refuge in Byzantine territory in 406/1016. The Fāṭimids used this as an opportunity to take control of Aleppo. There was de facto power sharing between the Kilabids, who controlled the flat country and the Fāṭimids who ran the cities. The Byzantines, who were tied to the Fāṭimids by a ten year truce, left well alone and even allowed the resumption of trade.

As regards religion, cities such as Aleppo, Tripoli or Tyre had a large Shī'ī population, but, like his predecessors, al Ḥākim did not attempt to impose the Ismā'īlī doctrine on the whole population. Even if the *qāḍīs* of Damascus were essentially Shī'ī, throughout the whole Fāṭimid period they tolerated Sunnism and applied Shāfi'ī law to the population. There was therefore no great expansion of Shī'ism in Damascus, and the extent of Twelver Shī'ism in Aleppo was due more to the Ḥamdānids' religious policy than the Fāṭimids'. This stance avoided clashes between Sunnis and Shī'īs, in contrast to the situation in Baghdad at the same time, and the revolts in Syria Palestine against Fāṭimid power rarely had religious or ideological origins.

There is fairly little known about the consequences in Bilād al Shām of al Ḥākim's persecutions of Jews and Christians. Palm Sunday processions were banned in Jerusalem as everywhere else, and the most spectacular measure, without a doubt, was the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in 400/1009. Other synagogues or churches were destroyed in Damascus and Palestine. Like their fellow believers in Egypt, the Christians and Jews of Bilād al Shām recovered their goods and rights at the end of the reign of al Ḥākim when he allowed them to practise their religion freely again.

Another consequence of the reign of al Ḥākim was the settling of Druzes in several areas of Syria and Mount Lebanon. From 407/1017 the members of this sect attempted to substantiate the divine nature of al Ḥākim, who they said had disappeared in 411/1021 but would return one day. Persecuted in Egypt, they found refuge in the south of Lebanon in the Wādī Taym Allāh at the foot of Mount Hermon, in Jabal Summāq in the north of Syria and in Ḥawrān south of Damascus. In 423/1032, the Druzes of Jabal Summāq proclaimed their faith openly and indulged in all kinds of excesses until the Byzantines of Antioch and the Mirdāsids of Aleppo joined forces to quell them, but the lack of sources about them gives us very little opportunity to trace their history in this period.

The disorder which followed the death of al Ḥākim in Cairo partly explains the political development of Bilād al Shām in the reign of his successor al Zāhir (411 27/1021 36). The Arab tribes began to cause trouble in Palestine and launched more raids in 415/1024f. The Banū Kilāb, Banū Kalb and Banū Ṭayy acting in concert swore to chase the Fāṭimids out of Syria Palestine and to share the region out between them. The Cairo authorities, short of money, did not have the means to come to the aid of their governor of Palestine, the Turk al Dizbirī. Damascus, under siege, organised its resistance, directed by the civilian elites and the militias, allowing al Dizbirī to get the better of the Arabs. But this did not mean an end to the rebellion. In 420/1029, the Banū Ṭayy and the Banū Kilāb suffered another defeat, and the following year Ḥassān ibn al Jarrāḥ suggested to the Byzantine emperor that they form an alliance to attack Syria. When the expedition resulted in a Byzantine defeat north west of Aleppo, the whole of the Banū 'l Jarrāḥ tribe returned to northern Syria and settled in the area of Antioch. Ḥassān did not return to Palestine until 433/1041 after al Dizbirī was thrown out of Damascus.

While the southern tribes were pillaging the countryside and cities, in northern Syria, Šālīḥ ibn Mirdās, leading the Banū Kilāb, was gaining a completely different reputation for the Arabs. Often praised for his courage and military skills, the Aleppans soon saw him as the only one capable of

bringing order back to their city. The Fāṭimid governor had been assassinated in 413/1022 and Ṣāliḥ settled definitively in Aleppo in 416/1025, founding the small Mirdāsīd dynasty which governed northern Syria and the Middle Euphrates area more or less continuously for fifty years. In 416/1025, Ṣāliḥ controlled a considerable part of Syria and the Euphrates valley. But four years later his alliance with the Banū 'l Jarrāḥ against the Fāṭimids was to cost him his life in the battle of al Uḡḥuwāna, on the eastern shore of the lake of Tiberias. His two young sons Naṣr and Thimāl shared his lands between them. It soon became clear, however, that the Mirdāsīds could only stay in power by putting themselves under the protection of one of their powerful neighbours, the Byzantines or the Fāṭimids. In 422/1031, Naṣr, now ruler of Aleppo but unsure about the loyalty of his brother, opted to put himself under the protection of the Byzantines. The signing of this treaty allowed the Byzantines to regain Edessa and Jazīra and to tighten their hold on the Syrian coast.

The reign of al-Mustaṣṣir, 427 87/1036 94

Between the accession of al Mustaṣṣir and the arrival of the Saljuqs, northern Syria was governed most often by the Mirdāsīds, who alternated between acknowledging Byzantine rule and Fāṭimid rule, sometimes both at once. When the Fāṭimids felt Aleppo escaping their grasp, they attempted to re establish direct administration there but were unable to maintain it for very long. By the end of the reigns of al Zāhir and Roman III (d. 1034) there was a willingness on the part of all the parties, Byzantine, Fāṭimid and Arab, to negotiate on the question of Aleppo which had been a stumbling block, the two major powers having laid claim to it. In 428/1038, agreement was reached after the emperor Michael IV had advised Naṣr to recognise Fāṭimid sovereignty. A thirty year truce was signed between the Fāṭimids and the Byzantines, who also obtained the right to rebuild the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

However, the alliance that same year of the Mirdāsīds of Aleppo with the Banū Numayr of Ḥarrān worried the Fāṭimid governor al Dizbirī, who had just restored order in southern Syria and in Palestine and did not want to see too strong an Arab force re form in northern Syria and Jazīra. Naṣr was killed in a battle and al Dizbirī entered Aleppo where he found a warm welcome from a population hostile to the alliance between Mirdāsīds and Byzantines. It was, however, a short lived victory. Suspected of personal ambition by the powerful Fāṭimid vizier al Jarḡarā'ī who was worried to see a Turk assuming too much importance in Syria, he was dropped by his army in 433/1041 and forced to leave Damascus. He died shortly afterwards in Aleppo, and nine

months later the Aleppans opened their gates to Thimāl, Naṣr's brother, who received a certificate of investiture from the Fāṭimid caliph while at the same time obtaining the gratitude of the Byzantines, who granted him the title of *magistros* in exchange for an annual tribute.

In the following years the Fāṭimids posed Thimāl more problems than the Byzantines, with whom he renewed a ten year truce in 439/1047f. The Fāṭimid decline gathered pace after the death of the vizier al Jarjarā'ī in 436/1045. In that year, al Mustanṣir confirmed the investiture of Thimāl in Aleppo, but their relations remained strained. In 440/1048 and 442/1050, two attempted Fāṭimid expeditions failed, but the new investiture accorded to him by the caliph finally allowed Thimāl to govern his principality peacefully until 449/1057f. The growing difficulties of the Fāṭimids (the split with the Zīrids, the failure of al Basāsīrī in Baghdad, the instability of the viziers) and the Byzantines, exposed to the first Turcoman raids, should have strengthened the autonomy of the Mirdāsids, had they not themselves been weakened by family divisions, particularly after the death of Thimāl in 454/1062. For the first time the Turcomans entered northern Syria as free men, called to the aid of one or another group. Faced with the powerful Saljuq Turkish army, the days of the little Arab Mirdāsīd dynasty, weakened by divisions, by rivalries with other Arab tribes and by the Turcoman pillages, were now numbered.

While northern Syria was slipping away from the Fāṭimids for good, their authority in southern Syria and in Palestine had been weakening progressively since the death of al Dizbirī. The future vizier Badr al Jamālī, a freedman of Armenian origin, was appointed governor of Damascus for the first time in 455/1063, but very soon met with the opposition of the Damascus militias. At that time, only the cities of Ṣaydā, Acre, Cesarea and Ascalon were firmly held by the Fāṭimids. Elsewhere, insurgent groups were multiplying. Ibn Abī 'Aqīl, a *qāḍī* and merchant, made himself ruler of Tyre in 462/1070. The same year the *qāḍī* Ibn 'Ammār took control of Tripoli while in Damascus the Fāṭimid authority was still having difficulty in gaining the upper hand. Everything seemed poised for the area to fall into the hands of the Turcomans, whose numbers in northern Syria were constantly increasing.

Overview of the Fāṭimid period in Bilad al-Sham

Syria was not keen to accept Fāṭimid domination, which explains the period of great instability which followed. The Fāṭimids came up against strong popular resistance, particularly in Damascus, led by armed militias of young people (*aḥdāth*), put under the direction of a chief (*ra'īs*) who was often a member of the civilian elite but also sometimes, as in the case of al Qassām al Tarrāb, one

of the people. There has been much debate about the nature of these popular uprisings, which also occurred in Aleppo, Tyre and Tripoli. They were in any case very different from the communes in the west. These militias were chiefly made up of disinherited young men, sometimes peasants come into the city, mixed with gangs of ruffians and bandits, and found it all the easier to impose their rule, the weaker the central authority. Their main aim was to defend their city against a foreign invader, but as they were also guilty of numerous acts of pillage, they often lost the support of the urban elites who disapproved of the trouble they caused.

The failure of the Fāṭimids in Syria is also explained by their wavering towards the Byzantines and the muddled organisation of their administration. Each time a governor took too much power or independence, he was considered a threat and eliminated by the Egyptian authorities, which made it impossible to install a power capable both of opposing Byzantine expansion and of controlling the urban militias and the Arab tribes. The behaviour of the Bedouins, who were very unreliable and more interested in pillaging than in installing true political authority, did not help matters. This situation of permanent political fragility also played its part in making Palestine a place of refuge for opponents of the Fāṭimids.

In attempting to maintain its autonomy between its two powerful neighbours, the Byzantines and the Fāṭimids, northern Syria held on to its individuality. Under the domination of the Ḥamdānids and then the Mirdāsids, it tried to develop its links with the Jazīra and went in search of a protector, whether Christian or Muslim. The Fāṭimids never succeeded in imposing their authority in a lasting way and even when prayers were said in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph, this acknowledgement was most often little more than a pure formality. For their part the Byzantines were anxious to extend their control in northern Syria, in Jazīra and on the coast south of Antioch. They never aimed to govern Aleppo directly but settled for imposing their protectorate on it. They often responded to the rebels' calls to Fāṭimid authority, but this never stopped them from trading or signing truces with their enemies when it was in their interest. The truce signed in 429/1038 opened up a new period in their relations with the Fāṭimids, which from that time became less contentious.

The numerous expeditions by both Byzantines and Fāṭimids had repercussions on patterns of population and economic development. They played a part in the depopulation of the limestone massifs to the south east of Antioch and made it a sort of frontier zone covered in fortresses and small forts. Economic life did not, however, grind to a halt in the whole of Syria as trade quickly flourished again following the truces. In the middle of the

fifth/eleventh century, the travel writings of Ibn Buṭlān and most of all Nāṣir i Khusraw give a very prosperous image of Syria. There are descriptions of cities where trade and craftsmanship flourished, well supplied with water, with multi storey dwellings, surrounded by orchards and cultivated land. Cereals, olive trees, fig trees, date palms, sugar cane and various fruit trees are most often mentioned. Some products were exported, such as figs from Ramla, oil from the Jerusalem area, bitumen from the shores of the Dead Sea, copper cauldrons from Damascus and snow from Mount Lebanon, transported by ship to Egypt. The documents from the Geniza also mention sumach, oak apples and dried fruit being exported from northern Syria to Egypt. All these goods were sent by sea or by the coastal route rather than via the interior of Palestine, for reasons of security. Muslim, Jewish and Christian pilgrims also travelled to Jerusalem and Hebron, to the great profit of the Muslim authorities who made large amounts of money in taxes from this.⁷

The Saljuq domination in Syria and its consequences

The Saljuq Turks moved into Bilād al Shām in increasing numbers between 457/1064f. and 478/1085f., bringing in their wake significant changes in population, political customs and religious institutions. But they never managed to impose a unified political power. Divisions very quickly gained the upper hand and created a situation favourable to the settling of the Franks in the area.

The stages and modalities of the conquest

The weakening of the Fāṭimids and the divisions of the Mirdāsids in northern Syria created conditions favourable to the establishment of the Saljuqs, who progressed in ways they had already used in Iran and Anatolia. Renowned for their warrior qualities, the Turks were often called upon by princes or *amīrs* wanting to fight their rivals. The first free Turks to enter Syria in this way were Turcoman chiefs, usually dissenters, who moved temporarily into northern Syria with their troops before going on to plunder Byzantine territories, pillaging everything in their path. Sometimes the Muslim princes who called on their services granted them *iqṭāʿ*s which allowed them to settle long term in the area. Others returned regularly to plunder the countryside and villages, as far as the outskirts of Antioch. The Christian and Byzantine populations were the first to suffer this, but the Muslims did not escape the pillaging.

The Turcomans worked their way down in the same way into southern Syria and the coast, exploiting the Fāṭimids' inability to defend their possessions

and the wish for independence of the cities they controlled. In 463/1071, Badr al Jamālī himself entrusted a Turcoman called Atsīz with the task of fighting the Bedouins of Palestine. Believing himself to have been poorly rewarded for this, Atsīz then occupied the whole of Palestine but without rejecting the Fāṭimid *khuṭba* and from there launched raids in the direction of Damascus.

The year 463/1071 incontestably marked a turning point in Saljuq progress, not only because the Turcomans succeeded in occupying Palestine, but also and above all because the army of the sultan Alp Arslān was victorious in the decisive battle of Manzikert against the Byzantines, a victory which was to open the doors of Anatolia to the Saljuqs. In northern Syria, Maḥmūd ibn Naṣr decided it would be wise to recognise Saljuq sovereignty in 462/1069f., and from then on prayers were said in the name of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al Qā’im. Some weeks before the battle of Manzikert, Alp Arslān obtained complete submission from Maḥmūd who was therefore left in Aleppo. But the end of his reign he died in 467/1074f. notable for his cruelties, was not glorious and his sons no longer had the strength to stand up to the Turks.

When Alp Arslān’s successor, the sultan Malikshāh, handed over Syria as an apanage to his brother Tutush, in 471/1078, the latter started by seizing Damascus and Palestine. Badr al Jamālī had been recalled to Egypt in 466/1073f. by the caliph al Mustanṣir who had made him a vizier, and Damascus, exhausted by years of poverty and famine caused by the ravages of the Turcomans, was no longer able to resist. Atsīz, who had returned to the ‘Abbāsīd *khuṭba* in 465/1072f., seized the city in 468/1076 but, two years later, fearing a counter offensive from Badr al Jamālī, decided to hand it to Tutush. The latter took the opportunity of installing himself there and eliminating Atsīz. He then distributed the *iqṭā’*s between his *amīrs*. Jerusalem was handed to the Turcoman Artuq and was passed on to his two sons Suqmān and Īlghāzī in 484/1091.

From 471/1078 to 473/1080f., northern Syria was once again pillaged by Turcoman troops. In 473/1080, Muslim ibn Quraysh, ruler of Mosul, entered the starving city of Aleppo without a struggle. An Arab and a Shī‘ī, he had recognised the caliph of Cairo at the beginning of his career, but in 458/1066 had accepted the alliance offered by Alp Arslān. With him, Aleppo passed even more closely into the Saljuq sphere of influence. However, his ambitions would soon lead him to seek an alliance with the Fāṭimids in an attempt to seize Damascus, something which he never managed to achieve.

The year 479/1086 saw the arrival in northern Syria of Malikshāh, in an attempt to restore order in a region where everyone was trying to expand at

his neighbour's expense. In 477/1084 Antioch had fallen into the hands of the Saljuq prince of Anatolia, Sulaymān ibn Qutlumush. He had got into conflict with Muslim of Aleppo and killed him in battle in 478/1085, before himself being killed by Tutush who wanted to seize Aleppo. But faced with his brother, Tutush had no choice but to concede. Malikshāh then appointed Yaghī Siyān governor of Antioch, and put his faithful *mamlūk*, Aq Sunqur, an ancestor of the Zangids, in charge in Aleppo. After the difficult years northern Syria had experienced, Aq Sunqur's government, which brought order and security, was unanimously appreciated.

The consequences of the Saljuq occupation

The establishment of the Saljuqs in Bilād al Shām had important demographic, political and religious consequences. The Turks were far from unknown in Syria. Already under the Fāṭimids, Turks had been governors of Damascus and the elite of the Egyptian army included many Turk soldiers, originally slaves. But with the Saljuqs, for the first time, free Turks settled in large numbers in the country.

How many Turks settled in Palestine? This is difficult to say. The numbers of Turks of an age to fight in Damascus in the first half of the sixth/twelfth century has been estimated at around 4,000 to 6,000, excluding the Turcomans living outside the urban centres, who were often accompanied by their wives and children. The number of Turks in Syria continued to grow in the sixth/seventh/twelfth/thirteenth centuries. In Aleppo, they first settled in the southern suburb of al Ḥāḍir, towards the end of the Mirdāsīd period. Their numbers increased considerably during the reigns of Zangi and, particularly, Nūr al Dīn. The assimilation of these new additions to the population, mainly consisting of warriors, occurred only very gradually. For example, Zangi had his troops camp south of the city of Aleppo, withholding the right to build permanent housing, for fear of destabilising a population already weakened by the difficult conditions imposed by the Franks. Under the reign of Nūr al Dīn, they were allowed to settle long term to the south west of Aleppo, in a suburb called al Yārūqiyya, after their chief Yārūq, and at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century a third suburb populated mainly by Turks appeared, called al Zāhiriyya after the Mamlūk settlement which grew up there. In addition to these groups of settled Turks there were also Turcoman tribes who throughout the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries continued to live more or less nomadic lives in the steppes to the east and south of Aleppo.

The Turks were not the only ones to accompany the Saljuq expansion. Many Iranian and Iraqi scholars and administrators moved into Bilād al Shām

in their wake, where they contributed in no small degree to the resurgence of Sunnism. Despite nearly a century of Fāṭimid domination in Damascus, and the appointment of Shī'ī *qāḍīs*, Sunnism and particularly Shāfi'ism had held strong amongst the population. All the Saljuqs had to do was reinforce it. From the time they took over Damascus, many jurists and specialists in *ḥadīth* came from the eastern provinces to teach in the great mosque of the Umayyads and in the new law colleges (*madrasas*) introduced by the Saljuqs. Iranian influence was apparent in the area of Sufism but also in administration. Tutush had an Iranian vizier, Abū 'l Qāsim ibn Badī' al Iṣfahānī, whose brother, Abū 'l Najm, was successively vizier of Riḍwān in Aleppo then of Ṭughtegin in Damascus. In this city, at the time of the Saljuqs and the first Būrids, all the viziers were of Iranian origin.

In addition to the *madrasas*, the Saljuqs introduced new political customs, starting with the Turkish conception of power according to which all the members of the Saljuq family had the right to govern. This is why the apanages granted to the sultan's brother were important: Tutush is a good example of this. It was at this time that the atabegs appeared, military chiefs who acted as tutors to the sons or nephews of the sultan, who administered his territories and tried to prevent any kind of rebellion against the sultan. The atabegs fairly soon tended to assume a lot of power. After the death of the sultan, an atabeg often married the mother of his pupil and founded his own dynasty. This was the case, for example, in Damascus with Ṭughtegin, the atabeg of Duqāq, the son of Tutush, who founded the dynasty of the Būrids (497 549/1104 54) after the death of Duqāq. Finally, in all their territories, the Saljuqs strengthened and widened the system of *iqṭā'*s which allowed for the *amīrs* to be remunerated through the granting of fiscal revenue attached to an area or region. With this came the custom of giving the holders of *iqṭā'* greater and greater concessions, with correspondingly increasing powers.

One of the frequently discussed questions of contemporary Western historiography is the fate of non Muslims under the Saljuqs. On the eve of the Crusades, Christian propaganda had it that the Christians were massacred by the Turks, to encourage Western knights to go to the aid of their brothers in the East. Should it be deduced that the situation of the Christians changed with the arrival of the Saljuqs? Most historians today now agree that the flood of Turcomans into the area led to pillaging and massacres, of which the Christians were the first victims, but definitely not the only ones. It is true that at a time of invasion and anarchy, when the state responsible for their protection was disappearing, the *dhimmīs* were the most vulnerable. Occasionally they were also victims of the dispoilments of other Christian

communities. But once the period of invasion had passed and order re established, the Christians regained their normal status of *dhimmī* under the Saljuqs. In Aleppo, this return to normal is borne out by descriptions of the Arab governor, a vassal of the Saljuqs, Muslim ibn Quraysh, and by the often quoted account of Matthew of Edessa about the meeting in 1090/1 between Malikshāh and the Armenian catholicos.⁸ The Armenians, like other Christians in the eastern part of the empire, were probably not unhappy to escape Byzantine religious harassments once and for all. If the arrival of the Saljuqs seems to have put an end to the important role of the Christians at the head of the Syrian administration, it was less to do with any sort of religious persecution than because the new leaders were often accompanied by Iraqi or Iranian administrators. In fact, it was above all the Crusades, from the sixth/twelfth century onwards, that brought about a worsening in the position of the *dhimmīs* before the arrival of the Mongols, which brought even worse consequences for them.

Rapid division

Divisions soon appeared in Saljuq Bilād al Shām, heightened by the political system (the importance of apanages, the growing power of the atabegs, very powerful *muqtas*). The system established by Malikshāh in 479/1086 did not last long. His death in 485/1092 was followed by numerous struggles in the eastern provinces of the empire. Tutush, believing that he had a claim to power, got into conflict with his nephew Barkyārūq (r. 485/98–1092/1105). He seized Aleppo and a large part of the Jazīra in 487/1094, but after his death in 488/1095 Syria broke away for good from the central Saljuq power in the East and his two sons Duqāq in Damascus and Riḍwān in Aleppo, although officially vassals of the sultan, in reality governed independently. They constantly fought over power in Syria while in Antioch the governor Yaghī Siyān played on their rivalry to govern in his own way. When Riḍwān fell out with his atabeg, Janāḥ al Dawla, the latter declared himself independent in Ḥimṣ. All these divisions within the Saljuq family itself allowed the *amīrs* and local civilian elites to maintain their independence in cities such as Tripoli (Ibn ‘Ammār) or Shayzar (Ibn Munqidh).

In Upper Mesopotamia, there were also deep divisions: the Artuqid Turks governed Sarūj and Mārdīn. In Mosul, another Turkish *amīr*, Karbūqā, had taken power. Small Armenian domains had also grown up in the north of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia: Thoros in Edessa and Gabriel in Malatya. All these circumstances made Bilād al Shām and Jazīra all the riper for the settlement of the Franks.

Bilād al-Shām and the first Crusades

The arrival of the Crusaders was perceived in the East as one episode among others in the long series of wars in Bilād al Shām. Arab authors never wrote a separate history of the Crusades: rather they included the account of conflicts with the Franks in their chronicles or local histories in the same way as other significant events of the period.⁹ Even though it took them some time to understand the true motivation of the Crusaders, the Muslims could not have been unaware that their own political and religious divisions were depriving them of any means of resistance. Some scholars and jurists attempted to remind them of this when the Franks arrived. But it was several decades later with the arrival of the Zangids that this unity began to take shape and bear its first fruit in the jihad. Bilād al Shām on its own could not hope to regain its lost territories, and the only possible reinforcements had to come from the east (Upper Mesopotamia, Iraq or Iran) or from Egypt. If the first successes were due to the concerted efforts of northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, it was the Syro Egyptian unity achieved in 564/1169 by Nūr al Dīn's troops that allowed Saladin to find the financial and human resources for his jihad.

The settling of the Franks and the first Muslim reactions

The Crusader armies arrived at the gates of Antioch in autumn 490/1097, after passing through Constantinople and, not without difficulty, crossing Anatolia. Baldwin, brother of duke Godfrey of Bouillon, made his way towards Upper Mesopotamia, where the Armenian prince Thoros handed over Edessa to him in Rabīʿ I 491/February 1098. Several days later, Thoros was killed in an uprising incited most probably with the approval of Baldwin, who seized power and founded the county of Edessa.

After a siege of more than seven months, Antioch was taken by the Franks on 29 Jumādā II 491/3 June 1098 and handed over to the Norman, Bohemond of Taranto, who became the first prince of Antioch. In Muḥarram 492/December 1098, the area of Maʿarrat al Nuʿmān fell into their hands and the inhabitants were put to the sword. The Crusaders then took nearly six months to reach the walls of Jerusalem, which was besieged and captured in a blood bath on 23 Shaʿbān 492/15 July 1099. The massacres carried out in the holy city were deeply imprinted in Muslim memories. The Jews were not spared, many being burnt alive in the synagogue. The two holy places of Islam, the Dome of the Rock and al Aqṣā Mosque, were converted one into a church and the other into a royal residence, subsequently a Templars' residence from 1118 onwards. Godfrey of Bouillon with the title of Advocatus (Defender) of the Holy

Sepulchre installed a Latin patriarch in Jerusalem. He died the following year and was succeeded by his brother Baldwin of Edessa, who had himself crowned king of Jerusalem in Šafar 494/December 1100.

The First Crusade was over, but the Latin states took several more years to expand and establish themselves. With the support of the fleets from Genoa, Pisa and Venice and the help of the Crusaders who continued to arrive in the East, the Westerners gradually seized all the coastal cities between Antioch and Jaffa. Cesarea and Arsuf (494/1101), Acre (497/1104), Beirut and Šaydā (503/1110) were annexed to the kingdom of Jerusalem, which also extended into the interior particularly to the south of the Dead Sea where the Franks took control, as far as Ayla, of the route towards the Red Sea. In the north the count of Toulouse, Raymond of Saint Gilles, took Tortosa in 495/1102, but died in 498/1105 without taking Tripoli, which did not fall to the Franks until 502/1109. His son Bertrand claimed his inheritance and took charge of the principality of Tripoli, the fourth and final Latin state in the region. In 503/1110 he seized the Krak des Chevaliers which guarded the road to the Hımş breach and was to become one of the most powerful fortresses in the area. Bohemond and especially his nephew Tancred extended the principality of Antioch towards Cilicia in 494/1101 and Latakia in 496/1103; this area was at the time under Byzantine control, and was to become a bone of contention between Franks and Byzantines for many years.

The pressure on Aleppo increased, as it was threatened simultaneously by the Franks of Edessa and Antioch. The principality of Edessa expanded progressively north of Aleppo and finished by covering, on both sides of the Euphrates, a large territory which included, at its largest, fortified sites as important as Mar‘ash, Bahasnā, Samosata, ‘Ayntāb, Tall Bāšir, al Rāwandān, Edessa, Sarūj and al Bīra. The Franks of Antioch, for their part, expanded along the eastern bank of the Orontes and thus came as far as the gates of Aleppo, forcing the city to pay them a heavy tribute in 504/1110f.

The Franks' success was unexpected, given their lack of numbers and unfamiliarity with the terrain. It can mainly be explained by the deep divisions between Muslims mentioned above. For this reason the Fāṭimids exchanged embassies with the Crusaders at Antioch and used the opportunity of the Saljuqs' difficulties in northern Syria to recapture Jerusalem in Ramaḍān 491/August 1098. The Saljuqs themselves were divided between those of Iran and Iraq, and those of Anatolia. The first group fought amongst themselves over the succession to the throne and the second were taken up by their struggle against the dissident Turks, the Dānishmendids, living in the north of Cappadocia. Many rivalries also set the Syrian and Mesopotamian governors

at odds. While Antioch was being taken by the Franks, when the *amīr* of Mosul, Karbūqā, arrived to help at the gates of the city, Riḍwān, suspecting him of having his sights set on Aleppo, refused to join forces with him and Karbūqā had difficulty imposing order over his own Turcomans. Equally, when the Franks were working their way towards Jerusalem, the governors of the regions they passed through often preferred to negotiate and pay them a tribute than to unite and fight them.

Very few contemporary Arab sources covering these events have survived, making it difficult to discover the first Muslim reactions to the arrival of the Franks. The earliest chronicles to relate the events of the First Crusade date from the middle of the sixth/twelfth century, at a time when the spirit of the jihad was having a revival. Some lamentations by poets such as al Abiwardī (d. 507/1113) and Ibn al Khayyāt (d. 517/1123) have survived, denouncing the Frank invasion and calling on Muslims to respond. More important was the treatise written in Damascus by a lawyer called al Sulamī (d. 500/1106). Even though this little work did not reach the audience its author hoped for, it certainly reveals the reaction of a section of the Damascus religious circles in the wake of the First Crusade. In it, the Crusade is put into context within the movement of Christian expansion in the Mediterranean, particularly in the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily. The author explains the success of the Franks as resulting from Muslim divisions, the lack of enthusiasm for the jihad but also the decline of religious observances. He advocates therefore a return to Islam to regain victory, an idea which was to spread and influence the politics of Nūr al Dīn several decades later.

Yet the reactions of the states were still weak or ineffective in spite of the losses and the now well established status of Holy City which Jerusalem enjoyed. Al Sulamī's contemporaries do not seem to have perceived as clearly as he did the true motives of the Franks. They occasionally confused them with the Byzantines against whom their jihad had waned over the centuries. The local princes were only concerned to preserve their power. The atabeg Ṭugtegin was the one who fought most bravely against the Franks to preserve supplies to Tripoli and communications with Egypt and Arabia. As a result he acquired the image of a brave fighter in the eyes of his contemporaries and he even became a legendary figure in the Frankish epic literature of the thirteenth century CE under the name of Huon de Tabarié. His activity was limited, however, and he himself was forced to sign truces requiring the sharing of harvests in the territories west of Damascus. He failed to save either Tripoli in 502/1109 or Tyre in 518/1124 and did not hesitate, in 508/1114f. for instance, to ally himself with the Franks against other Muslims

when his own interests were at stake. As for the Fāṭimids, after having vainly launched several expeditions against the Franks both by land and by sea, they attempted nothing more after 510/1117. Greatly weakened and with only a meagre fleet, they were probably not too unhappy to see the Turkish threat recede thanks to the presence of the Franks.

As for the 'Abbāsīd caliph of Baghdad and the Saljuq sultan – the only ones capable of mobilising the necessary forces for the jihad – they seemed little interested in Syrian affairs and much too occupied in settling their internal conflicts. The Aleppans sent them a diplomatic mission to Baghdad in 504/1111, but they only gained inadequate help. The sultan's army sent to Syria under the command of the governor of Mosul largely failed because Riḍwān of Aleppo refused to join forces with it. Another expedition was organised in 508/1115, led this time by the governor of Hamadhān, but it was no more successful as it came up against a Frankish Muslim alliance of Roger of Antioch, Ṭuġhtegin of Damascus, Lu'lu' of Aleppo and the Turcoman *amīr* Ḳilġhāzī.

All these conflicts had their consequences for the people. The eastern Christians usually preferred to stay in areas under Frankish occupation, and some were employed as interpreters or secretaries. Many Muslims, on the other hand, and a certain numbers of Jews, were massacred in the first conquests, if they had not been imprisoned or enslaved. Others fled towards Damascus, Aleppo, Egypt or even the less important Syrian cities. This immigration happened off and on until 518/1124. After this there was a sort of *modus vivendi* between the Muslims and their new masters, particularly on the land where they were more numerous than in the cities, continuing to cultivate their land and pay tribute to the Franks. But immigration did not stop completely, as shown in the well known example of the Palestinian Banū Qudāma family who left Frank dominated Nablus in the middle of the sixth/twelfth century for Damascus. Some scholars and administrators found administrative or religious posts in the court of the Būrids in Damascus. Amongst them were an ancestor of the historian Abū Shāma (d. 665/1268) and poets mainly from Tripoli or Ma'arrat al Nu'mān. On the whole they helped to strengthen Sunnism in Damascus, but there were also some Shī'īs from Tripoli and Jabala. Many of these refugees never returned to their country of origin.¹⁰

*Towards territorial unity and the rise of the jihad
under the Zangids*

The Turcoman *amīr* Ḳilġhāzī, ruler of Mārdīn and Mayyāfāriqīn, two important cities in Upper Mesopotamia, came to power in Aleppo in 512/1118, marking a turning point in the revival of the jihad. Until then Aleppo had been reduced to

relying on its own resources as all the reinforcements arriving from the East were seen as suspect by its leaders. In taking control of Aleppo, Ḫlghāzī began an alliance between northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia which gave him his first great victory in 513/1119 following the battle the Franks called the Field of Blood (*Ager Sanguinis*). Ḫlghāzī drew great prestige and a new image of fighter for the faith, but he was still not completely successful. The Turcomans in his army who had come with him from Jazīra were hoping only to go back there once they had got their plunder, thus ruling out any prompt action against the Franks. The core of Ḫlghāzī's states was still in Upper Mesopotamia, Aleppo being only a dependency in his eyes, and he himself was more of an adventurer than a man of state capable of mobilising a population in favour of the jihad.

After his death in 516/1122, Aleppo went through another period of instability which lasted until Zangī ibn Aq Sunqur, the son of the former Saljuq governor of Aleppo, came to power. During the first years of his reign, Zangī (r. 522 41/1128 46) devoted much time to disputes over the succession to the Saljuq sultanate and the struggle against the Artuqids of Upper Mesopotamia who could at any moment cut off the route between Aleppo and Mosul. But from 1130 he turned his attention towards Damascus, still ruled by the Būrid dynasty. Būrī (r. 522 6/1128 32), the eldest son of Ṭuḡtigin, had succeeded his father. Damascus then went through a period of great political instability marked by the assassination of many leaders, which could have been to Zangī's advantage. But his two attempts to take the city in 529/1135 and 534/1139f. resulted in failure. Unur, the *amīr* of Damascus, agreed only to recognise him as sovereign and to mention his name in the *khutba*, but this did not prevent him, in the interests of preserving his independence, from calling for the help of the Franks on several occasions.

The capture of Edessa by Zangī in 539/1144 marked a new stage in the history of relations between Franks and Muslims. Since Ḫlghāzī's victory over the Franks in 513/1119, propaganda in favour of the jihad had been increasing, as shown in the honorary titles given to the governors of Aleppo, praising their action as combatants in the jihad. Zangī embodied the hopes for Muslim reconquest and showed that victory was possible as long as the sovereign acted with zeal and determination. In 539/1144, the conditions were right for him. On the Frankish side, there was deep enmity between Raymond of Antioch (r. 1136 49) and the count of Edessa Jocelin II (r. 1131 49). In the kingdom of Jerusalem, the king Foulques died in November 1143. Baldwin III was still a child and his mother Melisende was regent. On the Byzantine side, John Comnenus, who had planned a campaign against Aleppo with the help of

Antioch, died in 1143 and his son Manuel was too involved in ensuring his succession to go off immediately to war.

After a four week siege, Zangi seized Edessa on Christmas Eve 1144. The consequences of this victory were immense. In terms of land, the whole eastern part of the county fell into the hands of the Muslims, thus ensuring the security of communications between Aleppo and Mosul. In terms of ideology, Zangi gained great renown and received many gifts and honorary titles from the caliph. The propaganda for the jihad increased and took a new turn as the Muslims realised that the reconquest of all the territories, and especially of Jerusalem, was now possible, while in the West the fall of Edessa led to the Second Crusade.

The death of Zangi, in 541/1146, came too soon for him to realise his ambitions. Mosul and the territories of Jazīra came back to his eldest son Sayf al Dīn while Aleppo and northern Syria fell to Nūr al Dīn (r. 541 69/1146 74). Although the younger, the latter quickly imposed himself as leader of the Zangid family and continued his father's work. He succeeded in reunifying Aleppo and Damascus, then Syria and Egypt by putting an end to the Fāṭimid caliphate. More than his father, he displayed his religious zeal and his wish to restore Sunnism, thus joining the efforts of the military men to those of the religious classes, and the pursuit of the jihad to re establishment of religious law.

Propaganda for the jihad developed greatly under his rule and was expressed in various forms: sermons, narrative texts, treatises praising the merits of Jerusalem, inscriptions on monuments and even the construction in Aleppo of a *minbar* which would be placed in the Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem on the day it was reconquered. The image of the sovereign fighting for the faith and anticipating martyrdom as an example to the people spread everywhere.

On the ground, the year 543/1148 saw the offensive of the Second Crusade, led by the king of France Louis VII (r. 1137 80) and the German emperor Conrad III (r. 1138 52). Rather than attack Nūr al Dīn's growing forces in northern Syria, the Crusaders made the mistake of besieging Damascus in the hope of cutting off relations between Syria and Egypt, and in doing so deprived themselves of their best ally in the area. The *amīr* of Damascus succeeded in negotiating cleverly by waving the spectre of the arrival of Nūr al Dīn and exploiting the divisions between the Franks of the West and the Franks of the East. Thus the Crusade ended in a fiasco, after only four days of combat, and before Nūr al Dīn had even had time to get there.

The following year, Nūr al Dīn attacked the principality of Antioch and was the victor at the battle of Inab (Ṣafar 544/June 1149) in which Raymond of Antioch was killed. The truce he concluded with the Franks eased the military

pressure on Aleppo by pushing back the border between the two states towards the Orontes. In Jazīra he finished what his father had started by, in 541/1146, taking back Edessa, where the Armenian population had been in revolt following the death of Zangi. The Armenian Christians and Jacobites had been spared the first time around, but this time they were massacred. With the help of the Saljuq sultan of Anatolia, Nūr al Dīn then reconquered in 545/1150f. the rest of the county of Edessa on the western bank of the Euphrates.

Nūr al Dīn was aware that the jihad could only have a chance of succeeding once Muslim reunification had been achieved, and made this his prime objective. Damascus fell into his hands in 549/1154 and became his new capital. Then the anarchy which prevailed within the Faṭimid dynasty allowed him to contemplate the conquest of Egypt. This was undertaken by one of his Kurdish officers Shīrkūh, assisted by his nephew Ṣalāḥ al Dīn (Saladin). Egypt was a tempting prize for Muslims and Franks alike. The former saw it as an opportunity to put an end to the Shīʿī caliphate in Cairo and to find reinforcements for their jihad, while the latter wanted to avoid above all being caught in a vice between Nūr al Dīn's states and to get their hands on the very rich economic potential of the country.

The Muslims, led by Shīrkūh, and the Franks, under the command of Amalric, king of Jerusalem, faced each other there between 559/1164 and 564/1169, over three successive campaigns. Finally in Rabīʿ II 564/January 1169, Shīrkūh entered Cairo. He was chosen by the Faṭimid caliph al ʿĀḍid (r. 555 67/1160 71) as his vizier, but as he died two months later he was replaced by his nephew Saladin who governed Egypt on behalf of Nūr al Dīn. In 567/1171 while the caliph was on his deathbed, Saladin re-established the ʿAbbāsīd *khutba*, thus putting an end to two centuries of Faṭimid domination and unifying Egypt and Syria under the same political and religious authority.

The revival of Sunnism

The Saljuqs strengthened Sunnism in Syria, but this did not mean that Shīʿism had disappeared. On the one hand, there was still a majority of Twelver Shīʿīs in Aleppo, and on the other, a new extremist Ismāʿīlī sect appeared, called the Bāṭinīs, but also known as the Assassins (*Ḥashīshīyya*). The latter opposed the Ismāʿīlī Faṭimids as well as the Twelvers and the Sunnīs. The sect had grown up following a problem of succession to the Faṭimid caliphate after the death of al Mustanṣir in 487/1094, and followed a policy of assassinating religious or political figures to achieve its aims. In Aleppo they found firm support from

Riḍwān. Chased out of Aleppo after Riḍwān's death in 507/1113 by the Aleppans who were very hostile to their activities, they managed to settle around 521/1127 in Damascus where they were tolerated by Ṭughtegin. But there too they were massacred in a violent popular uprising in 523/1129. From then on the Assassins carried out their activities from their fortresses in the mountain areas between the Orontes and the coast.

One of the ways in which the Sunnī elites tried to combat Shī'ism and any other doctrine opposed to theirs was in a policy of founding *madrasas*. The Shī'is in Aleppo had understood this when they violently opposed the building of the first of these in their city between 516/1122f. and 522/1128. When Nūr al Dīn took power in 541/1146 there was still only this one Shāfi'ī *madrasa* in existence. He and members of his entourage had a great number built in most of the cities of Syria and Jazīra. At his death, there were eight in Aleppo and about twenty in Damascus. Other establishments more specifically aimed at teaching the traditions of the Prophet (*ḍār al ḥadīth*) were also founded.

In the wake of the Saljuqs, Sufism had grown in a spectacular fashion. The great master of Sufism, al Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) spent several months in Damascus between 488/1095 and 490/1096f. and one of the *zāwiyas* of the Umayyad Mosque was named al Zāwiya al Gharbiyya or al Ghazāliyya to commemorate his stay in the city. In Damascus a more popular form of Sufism was developing, very well illustrated by the figure of shaykh Arslān, who died towards the middle of the sixth/twelfth century. A cobbler by trade, this shaykh was initiated into the mystic way and settled with his disciples in a Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*) built for him by Nūr al Dīn. Many miracles were attributed to him and after his death his tomb, outside Bāb Tūma, was revered, as it still is today. Nūr al Dīn, it was said, was a great admirer of his and is said to have wished to be buried with one of his relics.

More and more institutions accommodating Sufis were established in Syria. They were already known in Damascus where two of this kind of establishment (*duwayrāt*) were in existence even before the arrival of the Saljuqs. But it was mainly in the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries that they developed under Iranian influence under the name of *khānqā* or *ribāt*. In Aleppo, the people were at first very suspicious at seeing them built, perceiving them as a threat, a Persian innovation linked to reinforcing Sunnism. This also explains their growth under the rule of Nūr al Dīn. The Iranians continued to play a leading role in this until the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century. Thus, in Damascus, the role of leader of the Sufis was taken practically without interruption by the Iranian family the Banū Ḥamawayh al Juwaynī, from the end of the sixth/twelfth to the beginning of

the eighth/fourteenth century. The Sufi establishments which saw such growth under the Ayyūbids also acted as charitable institutions, housing the poorest people (such as single women and those without income who had decided to devote themselves to prayer and worship), who received food and shelter.

Saladin and the Ayyūbids of Syria

The Ayyūbids inherited the traditions of their predecessors, but also had to adapt to a new regional context. The jihad reached its height with the victories of Saladin over the Franks. Yet his successors, divided and threatened by the advance of the Khwarizmians and the Mongols, often came to terms with the Frankish power, accepting to deal with them to help them resist their rivals. The Franks did not succeed, however, in regaining the advantage, even when Jerusalem was returned to them in 626/1229. Their two Crusades against Egypt failed and the Latin states, greatly weakened by their own divisions, political crises and the decline in Crusader spirit in the West, did not last for long after the collapse of the Ayyūbid dynasty in Syria.

Franks and Muslims in Syria from 569/1174 to 658/1260

Just before his death, Nūr al Dīn, concerned at the growing power of Saladin in Egypt, had been preparing an expedition against him. Saladin (r. 569–89/1174–93), who had already subjugated Upper Egypt, made safe the route between Egypt and Syria and taken control of the Red Sea trade route by occupying Yemen, appeared as the most powerful *amīr* of his states. The divisions amongst the Syrians after the death of Nūr al Dīn and the tender age of the prince succeeding him would allow Saladin, in autumn 570/1174, to seize Damascus, Ḥimṣ, Hama and Baalbek fairly easily and to obtain a few months later his official investiture by the caliph of Baghdad, al Mustadī, over Egypt and Syria, excluding northern Syria which was left to Nūr al Dīn's son. When the latter died in 577/1181 it was a godsend for Saladin, who, having occupied part of Jazīra, seized Aleppo in 579/1183. He did not manage to get hold of Mosul, as he had hoped, but in 582/1186 there was an agreement under which 'Izz al Dīn, the Zangid prince of the city, agreed to help him militarily in his jihad.

Strengthened by all this support, Saladin now focused on the jihad. The '*ulamā*' encouraged him with various treatises on the jihad, armour and military tactics, or with books extolling the virtues of Jerusalem or the Shām. In the spring of 583/1187 the situation was fairly well in his favour. Truces had been signed in 576/1180 with the Saljuqs of Anatolia and in 581/1185

with the Byzantines which, for the time being, eliminated the worry of being attacked in northern Syria. The succession crisis in the kingdom of Jerusalem after the death of the leprous king Baldwin IV (1185) and his young nephew Baldwin V (1186) was also helpful to his cause. Guy of Lusignan, husband of Sibyl, the heiress to the throne, had been crowned against the advice of a section of the nobility, including Raymond III of Tripoli, and the kingdom emerged weakened by these disputes.

By attacking a caravan travelling from Cairo to Damascus, Reynald of Châtillon, the prince of Kerak, provided Saladin with the *casus belli* he had been waiting for. The fighting between Franks and Muslims took place on the Ḥaṭṭīn plain west of Tiberias on 25 Rabiʿ II 583/4 July 1187.¹¹ The Muslims, who had the advantage of numbers, surrounded the Franks, far from water, in terrific heat. The king and nearly all the nobility were taken prisoner and this resounding victory, by depriving the kingdom of Jerusalem of almost all its knights, allowed Saladin to seize the major part of the Frank lands. After Acre, Jaffa, Ṣaydā, Beirut and Ascalon, Jerusalem was taken on 27 Rajab 583/2 October 1187. The people's lives were spared, and those who could pay their ransom fled the city for the coast, while the Aqṣā Mosque and the Dome of the Rock were reconverted into Muslim monuments. After having failed at Tyre, in 584/1188 Saladin retook a large number of fortified places in the county of Tripoli and the principality of Antioch, and gave himself an opening to the sea by taking Latakia. The Franks held on to Antioch and Tripoli and one or two fortresses such as Krak des Chevaliers, Tortosa and Margat. In the kingdom of Jerusalem, the fortresses of Kerak, Montreal and Beaufort also surrendered to Saladin.

This disaster led immediately in the West to the Third Crusade (1189–92), led by three great sovereigns. The German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1152–90) died en route in Cilicia and his army dispersed, but the arrival of the kings of England and France, Richard the Lionheart (r. 1189–99) and Philip II Augustus (r. 1180–1223), allowed the Franks to retake Acre in Jumādā II 587/July 1191 after a long two year siege. The treaty signed between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart in Shaʿbān 588/September 1192 left the Franks a thin coastal strip linking Tyre to Jaffa, but most of Palestine eluded them. Only the freedom to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem was maintained. Saladin had failed to obtain from the neighbouring states and, most of all, the caliph the support he was hoping for and at his death in 589/1193 left the treasury completely empty, but emerged despite this with a positive image. His role in the fall of the Fāṭimids and his many victories against the Franks made him a legendary figure, in the West as much as in the East.

The Crusades continued to arrive in the Holy Land with more or less success. In 593/1197, the emperor Henri VI could not complete his expedition, but his army retook Jubayl (Byblos), Beirut and Ṣaydā. Later, after the Fourth Crusade was diverted towards Constantinople (1204), the Crusaders focused their efforts on Egypt. They had understood that there lay the heart of Ayyūbid power, and that this was the source of reinforcements in Syria. To take Egypt would be to take Syria in a vice, but it would also assure control of an area of important economic potential. There was a first attempt with the Fifth Crusade between 614/1217 and 618/1221 and a second in 647 8/1249 50 led by Louis IX. In both cases, after having taken Damietta, the Crusaders came up against strong Muslim resistance and their expedition ended in failure.

For her part, Syria felt much more concerned by the negotiations taking place between the sultan of Egypt al Kāmil (r. 615 35/1218 38) and the emperor Frederick II (r. 1215 50) over Jerusalem. After the death of Saladin, Ayyūbid divisions had quickly returned to the fore. His brother al 'Ādil (r. 596 615/1200 18) succeeded in imposing his sovereignty over his nephews before redistributing all the territories between his own sons, with the exclusion of the principality of Aleppo which was the only one to remain in the hands of Saladin's descendants until 658/1260. The death of al 'Ādil was followed by a conflict between his sons. Al Mu'azzam, in Damascus, was looking for the support of former Turkish soldiers from Central Asia, the Khwarizmians. Worried at the prospect of facing these pillaging hordes, al Kāmil turned to Frederick II in 623/1226 with the suggestion of handing Jerusalem back to him in exchange for his assistance against al Mu'azzam. The emperor, for his part, was in a difficult position, having been excommunicated by the pope in 1227, and was therefore open to negotiation. His Sicilian upbringing and his interest in the Muslim world also drew him towards it. The death of al Mu'azzam at the end of 624/1227 did not put an end to negotiation and the treaty of Jaffa in 626/1229 allowed the Franks to retake Jerusalem, with the exclusion of the Temple area or al Ḥaram al Sharīf which remained under Muslim administration. A strip of land linking Jerusalem to the coast and several other places such as Lydda, Bethlehem and Nazareth were handed over to the Franks and a ten year truce was signed.

There were strong reactions from both sides. From the Frank point of view, the Church disapproved of this agreement signed by an excommunicated sovereign which left a part of Jerusalem in Muslim hands while pieces of land around the city, which had once belonged to the Church, were not returned. The Muslims, for their part, were disheartened to have to give up Jerusalem

which Saladin had fought so hard for. Emotions were particularly strong in Jerusalem and Damascus. They ran even higher when, during the negotiations, al Nāṣir Dā'ūd, who had succeeded his father al Mu'azzam in Damascus, was besieged by the troops of al Kāmil and his brother al Ashraf. In Rajab 626/June 1229, Damascus surrendered and al Kāmil shared out the lands again, keeping the lion's share for himself: in addition to Egypt, his control now extended into Muslim Palestine and part of Upper Mesopotamia; al Ashraf inherited Damascus while al Nāṣir Dā'ūd kept only Transjordan.

Until his death in 635/1238, al Kāmil succeeded more or less in having his authority respected, but after him no Ayyūbid sovereign was able to achieve this. His son al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb succeeded him in Cairo but did not manage to get his uncle al Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl in Damascus to obey him. Both were looking for an alliance with the Franks and in 638/1240 al Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl even handed Jerusalem back to them just a few months after it had been reconquered by al Nāṣir Dā'ūd. Al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb then called on the Khwarizmians, who took back Jerusalem from the Franks in 642/1244 in a bloodbath. A few months later, the Franks in alliance with the Ayyūbids from Damascus suffered their greatest defeat since Ḥiṭṭīn near Gaza (La Forbie), allowing the sultan of Cairo to seize Damascus in 643/1245 and to reoccupy part of Palestine and then to rid himself of his bothersome Khwarizmian allies by crushing them in Syria in 644/1246.

The Muslim recapture of Jerusalem brought about another Crusade, chiefly French, headed by King Louis IX (r. 1226–70). As this was taking place in Egypt, al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb died in Sha'bān 647/November 1249 and his son al Mu'azzam succeeded him. But on 28 Muḥarram 648/2 May 1250, some weeks after the battle of al Maṣūra during which Louis IX was imprisoned, al Mu'azzam was assassinated by his father's *mamlūks* who took the throne. This *mamlūk* revolution of course had important repercussions in Syria Palestine. The Ayyūbid prince of Aleppo, al Nāṣir Yūsuf, immediately seized Damascus in Rabī' II/July 1250 and tried to march on Egypt, but was severely beaten by the Turks in Dhū 'l qa'da 648/February 1251. These divisions helped the Franks and Louis IX who, after his liberation in Ṣafar 684/May 1250, had gone back to the kingdom of Acre. Before returning to France in 652/1254, he managed to achieve from the Mamlūks the liberation of prisoners still held in Egypt, a ten year truce and a territorial status quo in Palestine.

The 'Abbāsīd caliph, very concerned about the Mongol threat to Baghdad, made many efforts to reconcile the Ayyūbids and the Mamlūks, but in vain. In 651/1254, the assassination of Aqṭāy, leader of the Baḥrī Mamlūks in Egypt, led to the arrival in Syria of numerous Baḥrī Mamlūks, including the future

sultan Baybars. Al Nāṣir Yūsuf gave them the warmest of welcomes, and could have used the opportunity of their coming together for another attempt to overthrow the Mamlūks of Egypt, but the desertion of his own troops, his hesitation, his inertia in response to the impatience of Baybars and his men, in addition to the rivalry between him and his cousin al Mughīth from Kerak, weakened him even further. During this time the Mongol threat was becoming more apparent with the fall of Baghdad in 656/1258, and when in 657/1259 an agreement was finally made between al Nāṣir, al Mughīth and Baybars, it was too late to save the dynasty.

The foundations of political power

Ayyūbid territory covered a large area including Egypt, Yemen (until 626/1228), Syria Palestine and a part of Jazīra. Under the reign of Saladin, Egypt was the area providing the most money and troops, but he himself only lived there very infrequently, spending most of his time on military campaigns in Upper Mesopotamia and above all in Syria. After his death, a sort of family consortium was established, with, in each important city, an Ayyūbid prince who recognised the sovereignty of the sultan of Cairo. Before his death, Saladin had planned for this power sharing between his three older sons and his brother al ‘Ādil, but in reality it was the latter who quickly took control and redistributed all the lands, with the exception of the principality of Aleppo, amongst his own sons.

This system of a family confederacy had advantages, especially in difficult times, when support was available from other members of the family. But in giving several members of the family fairly wide powers over a given area, it also encouraged personal ambition and divisions. The greatest of these, the ones setting al Mu‘azzam of Damascus against his two brothers al Ashraf of Jazīra and al Kāmil of Egypt in the years 621 4/1224 7 lay behind the rapprochement between al Kāmil and Frederick II. There were also very serious consequences for the rivalries following the death of al Kāmil (635/1238) between al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb and his uncle al Ṣāliḥ Ismā‘īl of Damascus, leading the former to ally himself with the fearsome Khwarizmians, while the latter sought the help of the Franks. There is no doubt that these incessant rivalries played an important part in the decline of the dynasty.

The concept of family power did not in any sense mean that the authority of the head of the family was not recognised. It was a sovereignty embedded in a greater hierarchical system with, at the top of the pyramid, the ‘Abbāsīd caliph of Baghdad, the only one who could guarantee the legitimacy of power. Since the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, the caliph had recognised the

political legitimacy of the Saljuqs by granting them officially the title of sultan. The disappearance of this dynasty from Iraq and Iran in the final years of the sixth/twelfth century led very quickly to a devaluation of this title. Already under the reign of Saladin, some chroniclers and biographers had become accustomed to giving him the title. The first Ayyūbid sovereigns to use it officially at the head of their titlature were al ‘Ādil in Egypt and al Ḥāhir in Aleppo. Then very quickly the Ayyūbid princes of secondary cities such as Baalbek, Baṣra or Bāniyās adopted it too. The title of sultan was now devalued and no longer the prerogative of the head of the dynasty, who continued to affirm his authority via other symbols, notably by having his name used on coinage and in the Friday *khutba* and by reserving to himself the right to mint gold coins. With the exception of a dinar issued by Saladin in Damascus in 583/1187 to celebrate the victory over the Franks, no Ayyūbid dinar minted in Syria has yet been discovered.

The Ayyūbid armies included many footsoldiers, but it was the cavalry which constituted their real strike force. Figures given for Egypt vary between 8,500 and 12,000 horsemen and recent studies have shown that the principalities of Damascus and Aleppo could provide between 3,000 and 5,000 horsemen each. In any case, the whole army was never mobilised on the battlefield, as garrisons had to be left in the cities and fortresses and sometimes troops were dispersed over several fronts at a time. It was then necessary sometimes to call on supplementary forces, most often Arab Bedouins and Turcomans, paid, variously, in *iqṭāʿ*s, out of booty or by taxes raised specifically for the purpose. These Bedouins were however difficult to control and often proved to be fairly unreliable and a nuisance once the danger had passed.

The means of payment for the regular army was the *iqṭāʿ* whose value was measured by the number of men the holder could arm. Until the end of Saladin's reign the practice followed under Nūr al Dīn of making the *iqṭāʿ* a hereditary concession was in force. The lands taken back from the Franks gave the sovereigns a large supply of *iqṭāʿ*s to meet the needs and ambitions of the *amīrs*. This is how great emiral families possessing powerful fortresses were made up. Saladin's successors made it their business to retake control of these territories to entrust them in *iqṭāʿ* to members of the Ayyūbid family, or to administer them in the name of the sultan by a governor (*wāli*) or a deputy (*nāʾib*), that is, people closely dependent on royal power.

The Ayyūbid armies were made up mainly of Turks, freed slaves or free men, of which the number had greatly increased since the beginning of the Saljuq era. The Kurds, originally free, were also well represented in the Syrian army from the sixth/twelfth century, and continued to arrive under the

Ayyūbids. The most striking example were the Qaymariyya, who played a very important role under the reign of al Nāṣir Yūsuf. Other Kurds, such as the Shahrāzūriyya, arrived in 656/1258 but proved to be much less reliable. Even though the Turks were in the majority, there was not the same large scale recruitment of *mamlūks* as in Egypt, and the Kurds continued to play an important role which became even more significant after 648/1250 with the gradual dwindling of the power of the great Turkish families of the time of Nūr al Dīn and the rallying of a number of Turkish contingents to the *mamlūks* of Egypt. The important role at the head of the state played by the non Turkish *mamlūks* should not be overlooked, as with the two *amīrs* of Armenian origin, Ṭughril and Shams al Dīn Lu'lu' who organised the regency of Aleppo and were close counsellors of the sovereigns, the former from 613/1216 to 628/1231 and the latter from 634/1236 to 648/1251.

The feeling of belonging to a particular ethnic group was real and was occasionally expressed in outright hostility. When the Turks took power in Cairo in 648/1250, rivalries only increased. Damascus was handed over to al Nāṣir Yūsuf by Kurdish *amīrs* in the garrison, rivals of the Turks, and the pillage of Turkish property by Kurdish soldiers which followed the animosity between them. What is more, the divisions within the army were not simply between Turks and Kurds: there were other rivalries, either amongst the Mamlūk Turks, or between them and the Armenians.

The civil and military institutions of the Ayyūbids in Syria were, as in Egypt, inherited from the Fāṭimids, the 'Abbāsids and the Saljuqs. There were the same offices of *wālī*, *ḥājib*, *ustādār*, atabeg, *shihna* and other palace officials. New military institutions, set to develop in the Mamlūk period, also appeared, revealing a real continuity between the two dynasties, even though in the Mamlūk period the fluidity of the institutions tended to give way to a much more formalised system.

The Ayyūbid viziers in Syria occasionally played an important political role, but their power always remained subordinate to the sovereign, who could dismiss them at any time. Saladin never had a vizier and even his closest advisor, the *qāḍī* al Fāḍil, who was in charge of the administration of Egypt, never held this title. His successors in Egypt were not that fond of this institution and the only important vizier in Cairo was the very unpopular Ṣafī 'l Dīn ibn Shukr (d. 622/1225). Damascus, on the other hand, had many important viziers from Ḍiyā' al Dīn ibn al Athīr (589 92/1193 6) to Jamāl al Dīn ibn Maṭrūḥ (644 7/1246 9), but it was in Aleppo that there was the greatest continuity to the vizierate, where there were six successive viziers

from 592/1196 to 658/1260, the most important being the great scholar Ibn al Qiftī, who was vizier twice.

Economic development, religious life and urban elites

From the time the Fāṭimids moved into Egypt, the Red Sea trade route to the Indian Ocean had superseded the Persian Gulf route which had made Baghdad's fortune. By adding Yemen to his Egyptian possessions and denying the Franks access to the Red Sea, Saladin was asserting his wish for tight control over the trade in spices and various precious goods from the Far East and the Indian Ocean. Egypt was the main beneficiary, but some of these goods were also redistributed towards Syria.

In addition to Egypt, Ayyūbid Syria traded with all its other neighbours. The Syrian traders met Iraqi or Russian traders in the Byzantine markets of Trebizond on the shores of the Black Sea, at Sivas in the north east of Saljuq Anatolia or at Antalya on the south coast. Trade with the Latin states and the Italian cities was even more extensive. Throughout the sixth/twelfth century, Pisa, Genoa and Venice had developed their commercial links with Egypt above all. In the seventh/thirteenth century the Italians entered the markets in Syrian cities such as Damascus and Aleppo where they sold chiefly textiles, copper, silver and saffron and bought spices, cotton and fabrics. The Venetians signed commercial treaties with the Ayyūbids of Aleppo which were renewed several times during the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century and obtained significant privileges in relation to commercial taxes, their personal safety and the safety of their goods, their premises, justice and minting coins.

Despite the conflicts, the trade between the Frankish coast and the city of Damascus was never lastingly interrupted. A record of customs charges from the city of Acre tells us that around 1245 there came from 'Païenime', that is Muslim countries, goods from the Far East and Arabia (spices, incense, medicinal drugs), and from Iraq, Syria and Egypt (perfumes, silks, various fabrics, dyestuffs, cotton, ivory, ceramics, salted fish from Egypt, sugar). In the kingdom of Acre shoes, pottery, salt, sugar, vegetables, fruit, olives and oil were produced. From the West came wheat, wine, dried fruit, salted pork, textiles from Flanders and Champagne, hemp, copper, iron and saddles. Some of these products were sold on the spot; others were re-exported to Muslim countries.

Commercial prosperity led to the development of markets and commercial premises in all the cities of Syria. In the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth

centuries many caravanserais, providing traders with well protected stopping places, were built or restored on the route from Damascus to Aleppo. At the entrance to cities, other caravanserais accommodated dealers who sold their products there to the market (*sūq*) traders. In the seventh/thirteenth century the markets expanded, both in Damascus and in Aleppo, extending outside the city walls. Population growth, unfortunately difficult to quantify, led to the development of new suburbs which, little by little, acquired their own markets and great mosques.

The establishment of princely courts in the main cities of Syria Palestine contributed to urban growth. The fortifications of Damascus and Aleppo had already been restored by Nūr al Dīn, who also endowed each of these cities with law courts and various religious monuments. The Ayyūbids actively pursued this building programme. Al ʿĀdil in Damascus and Baṣra, al Muʿazzam in Jerusalem, al Zāhir in Aleppo, al Maṣṣūr and al Muẓaffar in Hama and in Maʿarrat al Nuʿmān, al Amjad in Baalbek, al Maṣṣūr in Ḥimṣ were all great builders. The fact that the princes were surrounded by a dominant military class encouraged the growth of markets to meet their needs, for example for arms and horses, and the construction of hippodromes required for training and parades. In the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries Aleppo alone had five hippodromes, all in the suburbs apart from the one in the citadel.

The same continuity between Zangids and Ayyūbids can be seen in the policy of religious building. The *madrasas*, a good number of which had already been built under Nūr al Dīn, continued to multiply, with a mausoleum for the founder often being added. Saladin founded the first of the Jerusalem *madrasas* within the St Anne convent in 588/1192 and seven others were built during the reigns of his successors. In the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century there were ninety *madrasas* in Damascus and forty five in Aleppo. Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī law schools strongly predominated in Syria, but there were also several Mālikī and Ḥanbalī *madrasas*. The first *madrasas* were often constructed within existing buildings such as renovated old houses or former churches. Many grew up around the Great Mosque and the citadel so as to be near the religious and political heart of the city, while in the seventh/thirteenth century there were more and more burial *madrasas* outside the walls, near the cemeteries and the fast growing suburbs. The cities were also filling up with mosques, very many oratories (*masājīd*) and institutions teaching the *ḥadīth*.

Establishments for Sufis grew up in a similar way to the *madrasas*. New schools of thought influenced both by ancient philosophy and ideas of Iranian

origin spread within the Sufi institutions. Most were controversial and were occasionally roundly condemned by orthodox Sunnī. This kind of disapproval could have lethal consequences, as in the case of the Iranian al Suhrawardī, who founded an illuminating theosophy, and was executed in Aleppo in 587/1191 on Saladin's orders. The famous Andalusian Sufi Ibn al 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) spent the last ten years of his life in Damascus. His tomb, on the slopes of the Qāsiyūn, became a very popular place of pilgrimage. Shihāb al Dīn al Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), who was the caliph's ambassador to Syria several times, had also some influence on the development of Sufism in this area.

The first Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*, pl. *ṭuruq*) following a certain number of rules and rituals, under a hierarchical system of authority, began to be organised in Damascus at the beginning of the Ayyūbid period. The well known order of Qādiriyya, founded in Baghdad by 'Abd al Qādir al Jilānī (d. 561/1166) became established in Syria, especially in Baalbek, around the Yūnīnī family. Two branches of the equally famous Rifā'iyya, founded by the Iraqi Aḥmad al Rifā'i (d. 578/1182), also spread in Damascus. One of them, the Ḥarīriyya, very soon became suspect in the eyes of the Sunnī orthodoxy, but a larger group was the Qalandariyya, whose strange practices were influenced by Buddhism. This order was introduced to Damascus in around 616/1219. It declined under the reign of al Ashraf, renowned for his pietism and hostile to any slightly excessive form of mysticism, to recover around 655/1257. The Sunnī 'ulamā' were even more suspicious of the movement called the 'enamoured of God' (*muwallahūn*), whose theological and speculative positions were at least as worrying as their eccentric and excessive practices.

Besides these often controversial mystical movements, there were many ascetics and pious individuals who were completely orthodox and respected by all the population. These men, from very different backgrounds, advocated detachment from worldly goods, and individual retreat, and often lived near a well known sanctuary or the tomb of a pious person.

The decline of the Ayyūbid dynasty

The Ayyūbid dynasty in Syria survived ten years longer than the one in Cairo. It fell in 658/1260 under attack from the Mongol invasion. As early as 642/1244, the Mongols entered northern Syria, coming as near as twelve kilometres to the north of Aleppo. Al Nāṣir Yūsuf tried, as many other sovereigns had done, to play the diplomatic card. Several times, he sent embassies to the Great Khān to try to negotiate, but in vain. In the final

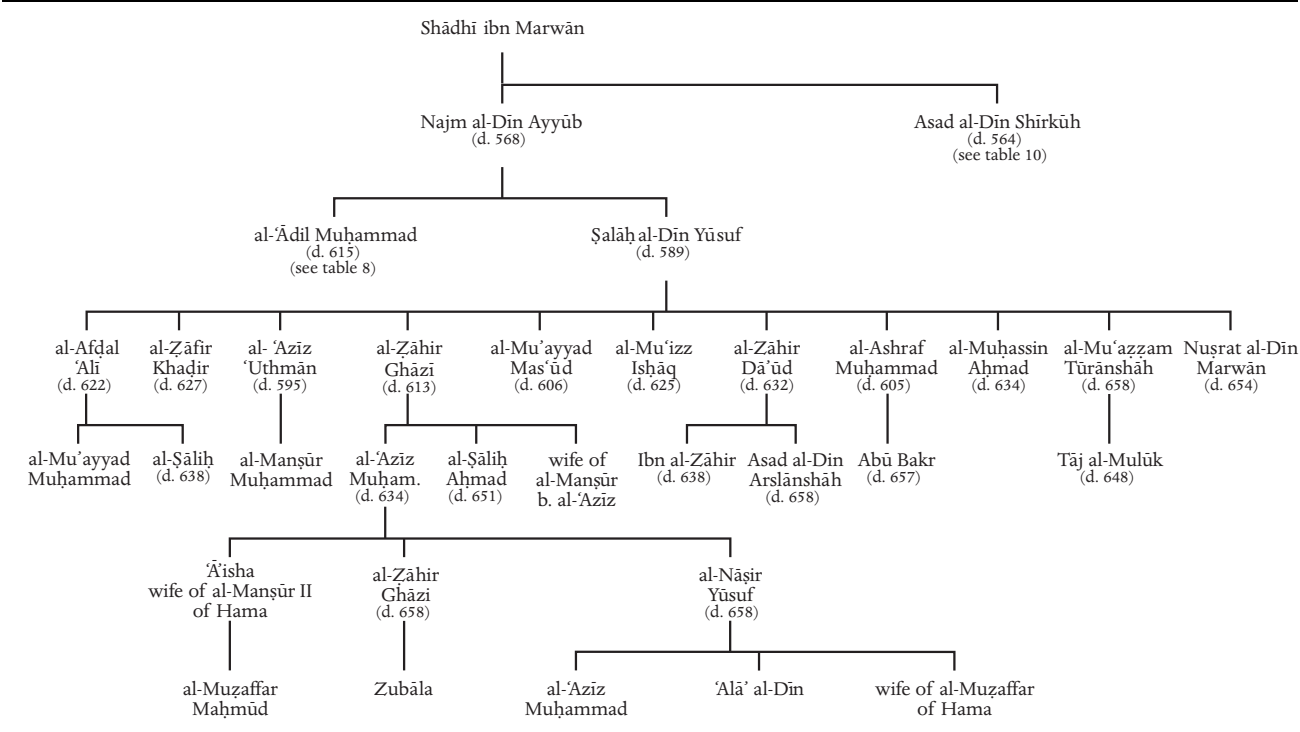
weeks of 657/1259, the Ayyūbid cities of Upper Mesopotamia fell one after another and in Ṣafar 658/January 1260, Hülegü, brother of the Mongol Great Khān, began to besiege Aleppo. He took the city supported by Hethum, sovereign of Lesser Armenia, and some Franks from Antioch. Hama and Ḥimş surrendered as soon as they learnt of the fall of Aleppo. Al Nāṣir, abandoned by a number of his troops who were critical of his inaction and had joined the Mamlūks of Egypt, had fled towards Gaza. Betrayed by one of his servants, he was handed over to the Mongols, sent to Tabriz and executed a few months later when the Mongols learnt of their defeat at the hands of the Mamlūks in Syria.

Damascus, abandoned, surrendered to Kitbughā, Hülegü's general, on 17 Rabī' I 658/ 2 March 1260. Al Mughīth of Kerak came and submitted, and was able as a result to continue to rule his lands under Mongol authority and Kitbughā completed the conquest of Muslim Palestine. A few weeks later, the Christians of Damascus, emboldened by the complete religious freedom granted them by the Mongols and probably believing that Islam was in its final days, gave full vent to their joy and publicly humiliated the Muslims. They were to reap severe repression for this following the Mamlūk victory.

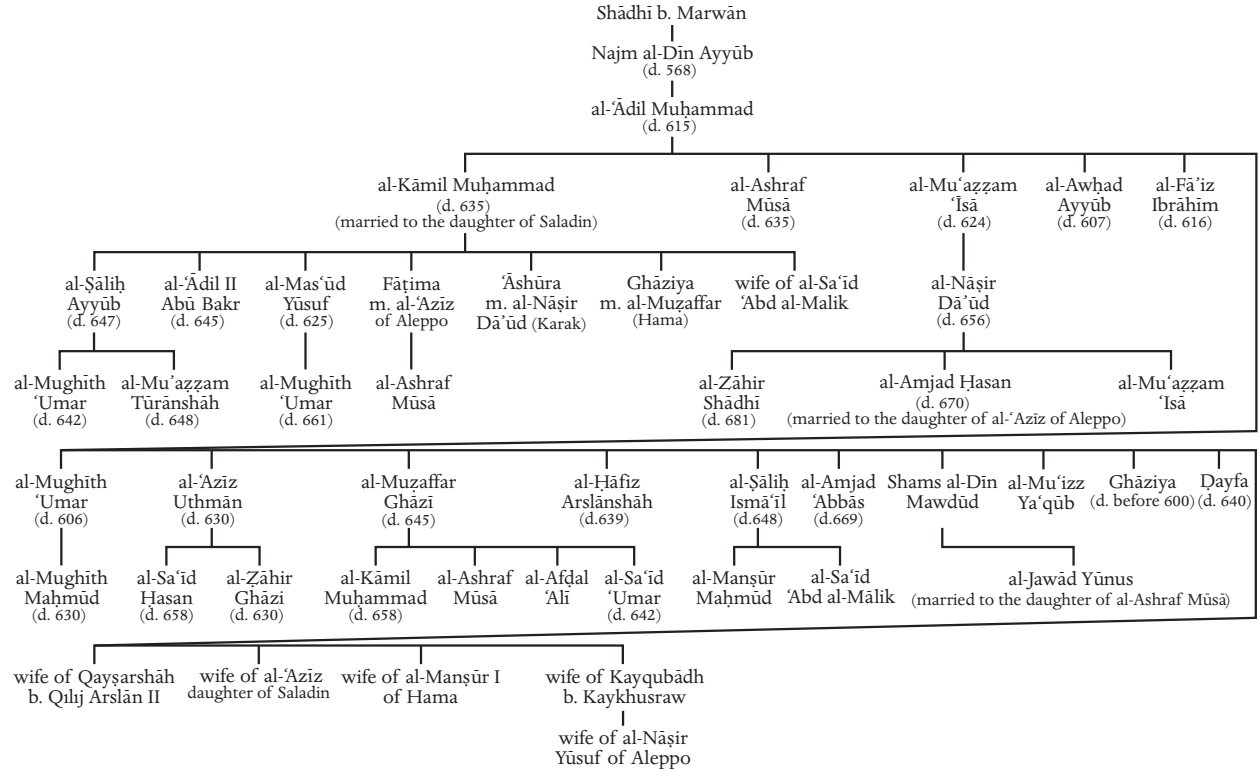
In mid Sha'bān 658 / 26 July 1260, then, the Egyptian sultan Quṭuz had begun to head for Syria, leading troops which included some of al Nāṣir's former *mamlūks* together with Arab and Turcoman contingents. Their victory at 'Ayn Jālūt in Galilee on 25 Ramaḍān 658/3 September 1260 and the death on the battlefield of Kitbughā allowed them rapidly to take possession of Syria Palestine. At the end of 658/1260, another offensive allowed the Mongols to reconquer Aleppo, but having been defeated a second time by Mamlūk troops near Ḥimş, they left Syrian lands in Jumādā I 659/April 1261 and withdrew to the east of the Euphrates.

There were subsequent raids, but Bilād al Shām slipped away from them for good, and came under Mamlūk domination for several centuries. The whole area was reunified under the authority of the sultan in Cairo. Very soon, power was represented in Syria Palestine by lieutenants of the sultan of *mamlūk* origin, based in Damascus and Aleppo, while Ḥimş, Hama and Kerak were governed by completely docile Ayyūbid princes. The small Ayyūbid dynasty in Hama managed to survive until 742/1342, but in 661/1263 the cities of Ḥimş and Kerak returned to the direct control of the Mamlūks who continued their conquest of Bilād al Shām until 690/1291 and took back from the Franks all the cities and fortresses still held by them.

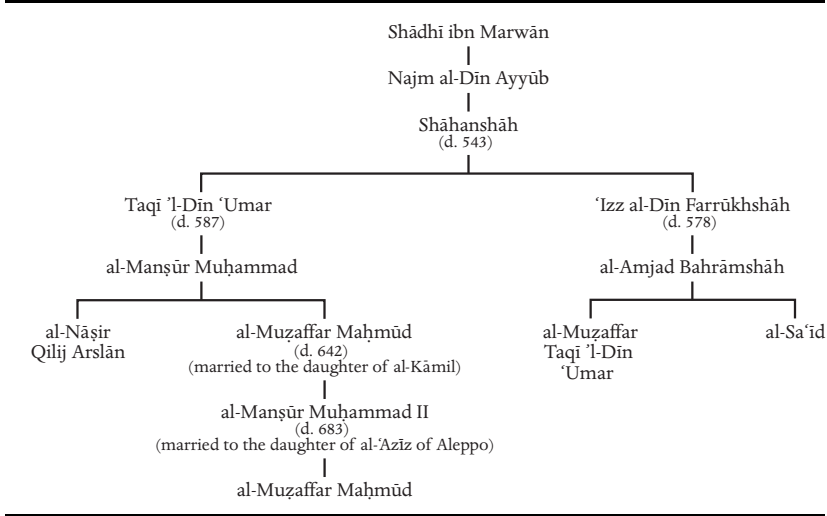
7 *The Ayyūbids: the House of Saladin*



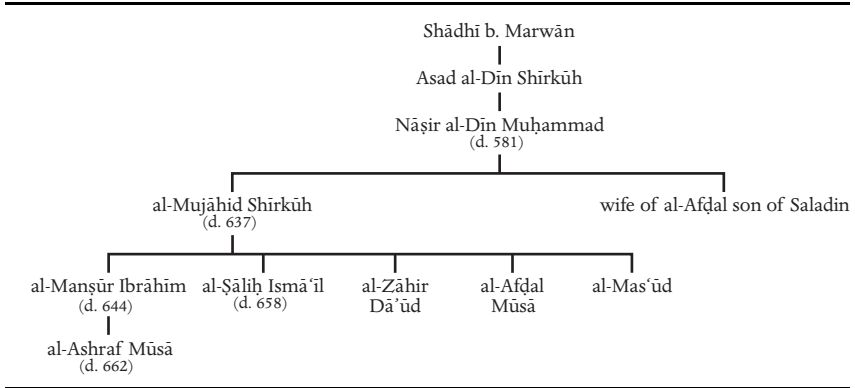
8 *The Ayyūbids: the House of al-ʿĀdil*



9 The Ayyūbids of Hama



10 The Ayyūbids of Ḥimṣ



Notes

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The Fāṭimid caliphate (358 567/969 1171)
and the Ayyūbids in Egypt
(567 648/1171 1250)

Y A A C O V L E V

Egypt and the historiography of the
Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period

Egypt conquered by the Fāṭimids in 358/969 was rich agricultural land with winter crops (wheat, barley, beans and flax) and summer crops (watermelons, cotton and sugar cane). Egypt's arable lands were dependent on the Nile whose flow governed the country's life cycle. The annual rise of the Nile used to begin during June July and intensified during August. The beginning of the rise made it possible for boats loaded with grain to sail towards the capital and the rising water of the Nile also made the canal of Alexandria navigable. The Nile usually reached its plenitude of 16 cubits as measured at the Cairo's Nilometer during late August or early September. The new agricultural year began during September or early October when the seeds needed for planting cereals were delivered to the fellahin. Egypt was a wheat producing country and bread was the staple of its population. However, since the Ṭūlūnid period, flax became Egypt's main cash crop and its cultivation spread throughout the fourth seventh/tenth thirteenth centuries and constituted one of Egypt's main exports. Flax was not only exported; there was also a strong local demand for it. Egypt had a long tradition of textile manufacture and its production centres such as Tinnīs, Damietta and Bahnasā enjoyed high international reputation.

Although any demographic assessments are riddled with difficulties, the population of Egypt is generally estimated by modern scholars at 2.6 million at the beginning of the first/seventh century. Medieval demographic assessments were higher and, for example, the tax collector on behalf of the Umayyad caliph Hishām (r. 105 25/724 43) maintained that there were 10,000 villages in Egypt and 5 million people.¹ The exact size of Egypt's

population on the eve of the Fāṭimid conquest is unclear, but there were Muslims, Copts and a small Jewish minority, while the number of villages was 2,395, of which 1,439 were in the Delta region.² This region comprised Egypt's agricultural heartland and we must assume that the estimate of 10,000 villages for the mid second/eighth century was exaggerated. At the time of the Fāṭimid conquest, the Islamisation of Egypt was, however, only partial. Substantial Islamisation occurred during the fourth/tenth century in the wake of a harsh suppression of Coptic uprisings, which had been sparked by oppressive taxation. Nevertheless, the Egyptian countryside (*riḡ*) remained mostly Coptic. The Coptic Church was a powerful institution and a big landowner. The power of the Church was also derived from the fact that Egypt was predominantly a rural country with a low degree of urbanisation. Alexandria was the main Mediterranean port and Fuṣṭāṭ was the capital city and the administrative and commercial centre. Fuṣṭāṭ was a Muslim town with a Christian and Jewish population whose safety and freedom of religious worship were generally maintained.

Our ability to reconstruct Egypt's history under Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid rule is seriously hampered owing to the fact that much of the rich historiography of the fourth seventh/tenth thirteenth century has not survived. Importantly, al Maqrīzī (766 845/1364 1442), who claimed Fāṭimid ancestry and showed great interest in Fāṭimid history, quotes some of the original works by historians of the Fāṭimid period.³ Al Maqrīzī, in three of his works – a chronicle devoted to Fāṭimid history (*Itti'āz al ḥunafā'*), a topographical historical work dealing with Fuṣṭāṭ and Cairo (known as *Khiṭaṭ*) and a biographical dictionary (*al Muqaffā*) – quotes extensively from the writings of Ibn Zūlāq (306 86/918 96), al Musabbihī (366 420/977 1029), al Quḍā'ī (d. 454/1062), Mubashshir ibn Fātik (fl. in the fifth/eleventh century), Ibn al Ma'mūn al Baṭā'iḥī (d. 588/1192) and Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278). Ibn Zūlāq's biographical dictionary of Egyptian judges (*qāḍīs*) is also quoted by Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī (773 852/1372 1449), who is our principal source for Ismā'īlī *qāḍīs* who served in Cairo during the Fāṭimid period. Fragments quoted by later authorities are, however, a poor substitute for the loss of the original works. The surviving section of al Musabbihī's chronicle *Akḥbār Miṣr* epitomises the extent of the lost data. It was a huge work of 13,000 folios dealing with the Muslim history of Egypt rich in information, and its obituaries mirror people from all walks of life.⁴

Al Maqrīzī's writings are also indispensable for Saladin's rise to power in Fāṭimid Egypt, his rule and the Ayyūbid period. Al Maqrīzī was familiar with Qāḍī al Faḍīl's lost chronicle, *Mutajaddidāt*, and quoted it in *Khiṭaṭ* and his history of the Ayyūbid Mamlūk period (*Kitāb al sulūk*). Qāḍī al Faḍīl's

Mutajaddidāt, as al Musabbiḥī's chronicle, was a very detailed and informative work that recorded events on a daily basis. For the political and military history of Ayyūbid Egypt after Saladin, the most important source is Ibn Furāt's history. Although the published text is marked by lacunas, Ibn Furāt (735 807/1334 1405) made extensive use of Ibn Naẓīf al Ḥamawī (fl. first half of the seventh/thirteenth century) and Ibn Khallikān (608 81/1211 82).⁵ Although Ibn Wāṣil's chronicle (604 97/1208 98) is an indispensable source for the Ayyūbids of Syria, it offers less information on the Ayyūbids of Egypt.

The survival of some Arabic Christian historical works dealing with the Fāṭimid Ayyūbid period adds significantly to Arabic Muslim historiography. The most important work is that of Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al Anṭākī who was a Melkite Christian and fled from Egypt for Antioch in 404/1013 during al Ḥākim's persecutions of the non Muslims. His chronicle is an important source for al Ḥākim's rule and Fāṭimid Byzantine relations. The *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* is the most important source for the history of the Coptic Church and also provides some information on the history of the Fāṭimid Ayyūbid period. This work is made up of a series of biographies of the Coptic Patriarchs and has a complex textual history.⁶

It must be said that our knowledge of Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid institutions, especially administrative offices, is quite extensive since historians of the Ayyūbid Mamlūk period such as al Makhzūmī (d. 585/1189), Ibn Mammātī (542 606/1147 1209), Ibn Ṭuwayr (524 617/1130 1220) and al Qalqashandī (756 821/1355 1418) have discussed them in detail. Some original Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid documents have survived and supplement information derived from literary sources. The epigraphic evidence for the Fāṭimid Ayyūbid period is also quite extensive and provides sometimes unique information, especially on legitimisation of political power.

The Fāṭimid imams in power (358–466/969–1073)

The conquest of Egypt had been a Fāṭimid goal since the inception of their rule in 297/909 in Tunisia and was motivated by the desire to supplant the ʿAbbāsids, whom they considered as unworthy usurpers.

Earlier attempts to conquer Egypt in 301/914 and 306/919 failed owing to poor Fāṭimid military performances and massive ʿAbbāsīd military and naval intervention. The campaign of 358/969 was launched only after extensive logistic preparations along the route from North Africa and Egypt were completed and Fāṭimid propagandists (*duʿāt*) in Fustāt had secured local support for the new regime. Eventually, the Fāṭimid conquest

of Egypt was achieved without much bloodshed and reflected both the vast military and financial resources that were available to the Fāṭimid general Jawhar and the disintegration of the Ikshīdīd regime. In 358/969, the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, which was under Būyid tutelage, remained passive and later attempts to fight the Fāṭimids by proxy, the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn, failed. Although the immediate impact of the Fāṭimid conquest on Egypt was minimal, in the long term the country underwent many changes under the rule of the Fāṭimids.

The period of Fāṭimid rule in Egypt can be divided into two distinctive phases: before and after the civil war of the 450s/1060s and the early 460s/1070s which also marked a transition from civilian to military rule. During the first phase, the imam was the source of political authority and he ruled through his court, the vizier and the heads of the administrative offices. Although the army was the main buttress of the regime and many corps were stationed in Cairo to protect the palace complex and the regime, the *amīrs* played no political role in the state. During this period, the political scene was dominated by a number of powerful civilian viziers. Late medieval historians portrayed the vizier Ya'qūb ibn Killis (d. 380/990) as the creator of the Fāṭimid administrative system but his contribution seems to have been exaggerated. They had been captivated by Ibn Killis's friendly relations with al 'Azīz, and his fabulous riches and influence. A more realistic depiction of the vizier's powers is provided by Aḥmad al Jarjārā'ī's letter of appointment as vizier in 418/1027. The document sets forth what can be described as the ideological framework of, or the justification for, the post of the vizier, invoking the biblical Qur'ānic precedents of Moses, Aharon and Joseph. Clearly specified in the document are the duties of the vizier, who was responsible for fiscal matters and the governing of the provinces. The document also states that the vizier has to act as mediator between the circles supporting the regime, provincial governors, scribes of the administrative offices and finally the subjects. The just treatment of the subjects in the capital and provinces is proclaimed as one of the vizier's duties, including, if necessary, by dismissal of oppressive governors.⁷

The vizier was the head of the administration whose structure is revealed through the names of the administrative offices. These were created according to three criteria: function, geography and persona. There were central offices such as the Office of Army or Office of Taxes while other offices were entrusted with inspection duties. To what extent the administrative duties of the central offices were co-ordinated with offices that were responsible for certain geographical regions remains unknown. Separate offices administered the private properties and incomes of the imam as well as those of other

members of the royal family, including women. The existence of the Office of Army did not prevent the creation of offices which dealt with certain military corps, and the demarcation line between the different offices and administrative duties is far from clear. Overlapping among the various administrative offices must have been widespread.

Our knowledge of the Fāṭimid provincial administration is very restricted. For example, in the 410s/1020s in the town of Ramla, a provincial capital in Palestine, there resided several Fāṭimid officials: the governor, the military governor, the chief of the secret police and intelligence, the fiscal administrator, the audit and the chief of Fāṭimid propaganda. To what extent there was a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the governor and the military governor remains vague.⁸

The structure of the Fāṭimid army is vaguely attested to in the sources, but its ethnic composition and the status of the troops are widely referred to. In the mid fifth/eleventh century the army was tens of thousands strong and made up of a bewildering assortment of corps, some of which were manned by free born troops while others by military slaves. Africans, Berbers, Turks and Bedouins served in the army, which consisted of infantry and cavalry and other small specialised units such as nafta hurlers and troops employed during siege operations. Most of the infantry regiments were manned by African military slaves while the Turks served as cavalry.⁹

The foundation of Cairo played an important role in the successful consolidation of the Fāṭimid rule in Egypt. It was a fortified town and its fortifications saved the Fāṭimids during the Qarmaṭī invasion of 361/976. Cairo served as the seat of the Fāṭimid imams throughout the whole period of their rule in Egypt. The palace complex was huge and formed a city within a city in which lived and worked several thousand people. But Cairo was more than a palace city; it rapidly became a thriving urban centre. The Fāṭimid rulers owned vast commercial properties in Cairo, which were rented on a monthly basis. Cairo had an unmistakable Ismā'īlī character. The imposition of Ismā'īlism on Egypt was a gradual process that took place between 358/969 and 366/976. It involved the Ismā'īlisation of the rites of the Festival of Breaking of Ramaḍān, the introduction of the Shī'ī formula of the call to prayer (*adhān*) and the appointment of Ismā'īlī judges who accorded to the Fāṭimid law superiority in cases of inheritance. Even after the Ismā'īlisation of the religious life in Fustāṭ, Cairo retained a more distinctive and profound Ismā'īlī character and, in this respect, differed from Fustāṭ. The Ismā'īlī character of Cairo was enhanced by the teaching of

Ismāʿīlism (*majālis al ḥikma*) which took place only in Cairo at the palace and the Azhar Mosque.¹⁰ The population of Cairo during the fourth fifth/tenth eleventh centuries consisted of classes associated with the regime, of which the military was the largest group. Others were administrators and merchant suppliers of the court. These groups were more favourably disposed to the religious propaganda of the regime than the Sunnī population of Fustāt, where Sunnī Islam and learning flourished. Beyond the confines of the court and Cairo, Ismāʿīlism won only a limited following in Egypt.

Al ʿAzīz's reign (365 86/975 96) was a period of internal stability and saw the establishment of the Fāṭimid rule in Damascus and Palestine but these achievements were seriously threatened during al Ḥākim's rule (386 411/996 1021). Al Ḥākim's religious policies brought about social unrest and the propagators who proclaimed his divinity were killed and expelled. These turbulent years witnessed both the decline of families which had long been associated with the Fāṭimids and the erosion in the position of the Kutāma Berbers as the mainstay of the Fāṭimid regime. The Fāṭimid rule was saved through a *coup d'état* staged by al Ḥākim's sister, the princess Sitt al Mulk, who brought about both al Ḥākim's demise and the coronation of his son al Ḍāhir (r. 411 27/1021 36).

The sliding of the Fāṭimid state into the devastating civil war of the 450s/1060s and the early 460s/1070s was a result of a struggle for dominance between the blacks and the Turks in the army. This conflict was about position and remuneration and was fuelled by ethnic animosities, different social status of the troops (African military slaves versus Turkish free born warriors) and different military specialisation (African infantry versus Turkish cavalry). The civil war caused large scale devastation: sections of the capital were destroyed, the treasures stored at the palace complex were looted, and members of the royal family fled Egypt. State institutions such as the administration and the tax collection system, the judicature and the army crumbled. In the midst of the havoc al Mustanṣir (r. 427 87/1036 94), the ruling Fāṭimid imam, contacted Badr al Jamālī, the governor of Acre, and commanded him to restore order in Egypt. In winter 466/1073, Badr arrived with his private army in the Mediterranean port of Tinnīs and began a ruthless campaign against the various elements that had seized power in the provinces. The restoration of order had an immediate positive effect on the agricultural output and the flow of taxes. In 469/1076, three years after his arrival to Egypt, Badr defeated the invasion of Egypt led by Atsīz ibn Uvaq, a Turkish chieftain from Syria.

The Fāṭimid state under military rule (466–567/1073–1171)

Badr al Jamālī was the first person in Fāṭimid history who rose to a position of power through an independent power base, i.e. his army. According to the standard medieval Islamic administrative terminology, he is described as a vizier of the sword in contrast to his civilian predecessors, the viziers of the pen. But the full scope of his powers is revealed by his titles. He was addressed as the Most Illustrious Lord and bore the following titles: Helper of the Imām, Sword of Islam, Commander of the Armies, Protector of the Qāḍīs of the Muslims and Guide of the Propagandists of the Believers (i.e. Ismāʿīlīs). This assortment of titles became the standard titulature of the Fāṭimid military viziers of the sixth/twelfth century.

Badr succeeded in both restoring the power of the Fāṭimid state and the expansion of his independent military power base. The economic recovery was quick and impressive and upon his death in 487/1094 he left 6.4 million dinars in cash, while the total cash reserves of the state were as high as 12,200,550 dinars. Economic prosperity continued under the rule of Badr's son al Afḍal (487–515/1094–1121), whose annual tax revenues stood at 5 million dinars, and it is said that this was achieved without resorting to oppressive methods while maintaining the prosperity of the rural areas.¹¹ Badr rebuilt Cairo and surrounded the town with new walls and he partially re established Fāṭimid rule in Syria. Parallel with the efforts to revive the economy, Badr created his own corps of military slaves and welcomed the emigration of Christian Armenian military elements to Egypt. His policy towards the Armenians might be explained by ethnic affiliations, since Badr was a Muslim Armenian who rose to eminence through military slavery. But other factors may have been at work too. The creation of a slave corps was, however, a slow process, and Badr's slave corps was no more than 700 men strong while the recruitment of free born Christian Armenians was a much faster and cheaper way to create a sizeable army of 7,000 troops. One of the main advantages of the Armenians as military manpower was their ability to fight as both cavalry and infantry.¹²

The strength of the personal power base created by Badr was revealed upon his death: Badr's *amīrs* rallied behind their master's son, al Afḍal, and stopped any attempt of al Mustanṣir to regain full powers. A precedent of a hereditary military vizierate was established, and al Afḍal, in his capacity as the new military ruler of the state, determined the succession to the throne upon al Mustanṣir's death in 487/1094. Al Afḍal established al Mustanṣir's youngest

son as the new imam, under the reigning title al-Musta'li (487–495/1094–1101). His self-interest was obvious, since al-Musta'li was married to Badr's daughter, but his intervention created a schism within the Fāṭimid movement. According to the Ismā'īlī political doctrine, the imamate is passed by *naṣṣ*, i.e. an explicit designation from the imam to his son. Nizār, al-Mustaṣṣir's eldest son, claimed to have been given the *naṣṣ* by his father and stirred up a rebellion in Alexandria. He was defeated, and died in obscure circumstances, but his followers, the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, claimed that he passed the imamate to his grandson. In contrast with Sunnī Islam, where brute force was the ultimate arbitrator into political disputes, in the Shī'ī–Ismā'īlī Islam, because of the pivotal role of the imam in the religious and political system, successional disputes turned in perpetual schisms. The tutelage of the Jamālī house of military viziers exacted a heavy political price from the Fāṭimids.

In 495/1101, upon al-Musta'li's death, he was succeeded by his five-year-old son al-Āmir, who eventually in 515/1121 managed to bring about al-Afḍal's demise. Al-Afḍal's twenty-seven years of military rule were marked by his failure to deal with the Crusades. Although the Fāṭimids were aware of the advance of the armies of the First Crusade, al-Afḍal failed to comprehend their intentions for a long time. When he realised that he would have to fight the Franks, his military moves were slow and the Fāṭimid army that arrived in Ascalon, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in Sha'bān 492/July 1099, suffered a humiliating defeat. Although the Fāṭimids fought the Crusaders in Palestine during the first decade of the sixth/twelfth century, their actions lacked determination and overall strategy. The Fāṭimids were unable to avert the fall of the coastal towns of Palestine and Syria and their navy was no match for the European fleets that supported the Crusades.¹³

Following the defeat of 492/1099 at Ascalon, al-Afḍal initiated a programme of military reforms, which involved the initiation of a military training programme modelled after the institution of military slavery. Al-Afḍal established seven barracks (*hujras*), where young boys were trained. These, however, were not slaves, but sons of soldiers and civilian employees of the Fāṭimid state.¹⁴

In the long term, al-Afḍal's military reforms failed to improve the performances of the Fāṭimid army and the *hujariyya* troops are mentioned in the context of court ceremonies and not combat. The Fāṭimid army of the second half of the sixth/twelfth century was a large force composed of cavalry and tens of thousands of black infantry and was scorned by the Franks for its poor fighting capabilities.¹⁵ Although militarily weak, the army – or more exactly its officer corps – was deeply involved in politics. Al-Āmir was the last Fāṭimid ruler who ruled independently for some years. In 515/1121, after the

assassination of al-Afḍal, al-Āmir appointed a new vizier, al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'ihī, whom he arrested and executed in 519/1125. For five years between 519/1125 and 524/1130, al-Āmir held the reins of power in his hands, being the last Fāṭimid ruler who exercised political authority.

Al-Āmir's assassination in 524/1130 plunged the Fāṭimids into a second schism. Al-Āmir's *amīrs* became involved in his succession. They ignored the *naṣṣ* conferred by their master on his infant son, Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Ṭayyib, and his designation of him as the heir to the throne. They proclaimed al-Āmir's cousin, 'Abd al-Majīd, as the new ruler who was to act as guardian for al-Āmir's son yet to be born (al-Ṭayyib's fate is not alluded to in the sources any more). 'Abd al-Majīd was, however, deposed in a military coup led by Abū 'Alī Kutayfāt, the only surviving son of al-Afḍal. For less than a year, he ruled the Fāṭimid state, but he was assassinated in 526/1131. The demise of Kutayfāt paved the way for the restoration of 'Abd al-Majīd to the throne and the declaration that he was a legitimate imam in his own right. He ruled under the regnal title al-Ḥāfiẓ until his death in 544/1149.¹⁶ Both the Nizārī and Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlīs disputed al-Ḥāfiẓ's claim to the imamate, the latter believing that al-Ṭayyib was living in concealment in Yemen.

The predominant position of Ismā'īlism in Fāṭimid Egypt was slowly eroded during the rule of Badr and al-Afḍal and later Kutayfāt, who, in 525/1130, nominated four chief judges, belonging to the Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, Imāmī and Fāṭimid schools of law, and empowered them to handle inheritance cases according to their school. Kutayfāt's policy was the continuation of that of Badr and Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'ihī who exempted the Sunnīs from being subjected to the Fāṭimid law of inheritance. The four judges nominated by Kutayfāt were removed following his demise, but whether the Fāṭimid law regained its superior position in cases of inheritance remains unclear. However, religious life in Fāṭimid Egypt during the sixth/twelfth century was marked by contradictions. Parallel with the process of the de-Ismā'īlisation of the legal system there was a marked involvement of the regime in the celebration of Muslim religious festivals, including the introduction of new ones. The most important festival initiated by the Fāṭimid regime was the *mawlid al-nabī*, Muḥammad's Birthday. Other *mawlids* celebrated in Fāṭimid Egypt included those of 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn and the reigning Fāṭimid imam (al-Āmir, for example, celebrated his *mawlid* in 517/1123). The festival of Muḥammad's Birthday was later also adopted by the Sunnīs and its Fāṭimid origin was conveniently forgotten. Although diluted beyond recognition and divested of their Ismā'īlī content, some religious practices of the Fāṭimid period left their mark on later periods. The North African traveller Ibn Jubayr, who visited

Egypt a decade after the overthrow of the Fāṭimids, left a detailed description of the acts of veneration performed at the shrine of Ḥusayn in Cairo. The cult of Ḥusayn was introduced to Egypt by the Fāṭimids but, it seems, the people venerated him as a member of the Prophet's extended family (*ahl al-bayt*) rather than as a Shī'ī figure. The adoption and spread of certain Fāṭimid religious practices was a result of a receptive mood of the masses, which infused them with a new and different content.¹⁷

Throughout the 420s–450s/1030s–1060s, the Fāṭimid state saw the rise and fall of several military viziers and a steady decline of its international prestige. Fāṭimid Egypt became the 'sick man on the Nile' – an economically prosperous and politically weak country coveted by its powerful neighbours the Franks and Nūr al-Dīn of Damascus. From 560/1164 to 565/1169 the Franks and Nūr al-Dīn fought on Egyptian soil in an attempt to conquer Egypt, or at least to prevent their adversary from gaining any advantage in it. In 565/1169 the armies of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem withdrew from Egypt and Nūr al-Dīn's expeditionary force led by Shīrkūh and later Saladin achieved supremacy in Egypt.

The rise of Saladin and Ayyūbid rule in Egypt

In 565/1169 Saladin was nominated as Fāṭimid vizier, but the safeguarding of Fāṭimid interests was not his priority. From the position of vizier and with the co-operation of key Fāṭimid administrators he began to undermine the position of al-ʿĀḍid, the last Fāṭimid ruling imam (555–67/1160–71). Saladin fought and destroyed the regiments of black infantry that were stationed in Cairo, dispossessed Fāṭimid *amīrs* of their fiefs (*iqṭāʿs*) and urban properties and established law colleges (*madrāsas*) that symbolised Sunnī Islam. Members of Saladin's family profited immensely from the establishment of the Ayyūbid rule in Egypt. Saladin's father was granted the revenues of Alexandria and the Buḥayra province while Saladin's brothers Tūrānshāh and Būrī received the revenues of Upper Egypt and the Fayyūm district. Saladin rendered the Fāṭimid state defunct and obliterated its Ismāʿīlī character even before the death of al-ʿĀḍid in 567/1171.

Saladin and his Ayyūbid successors brought Egypt back to the Sunnī fold and the main instrument of their policy was the establishment of law colleges whose teachers and students were supported through pious endowments (*waqfs*). The reinstitution of Sunnī Islam went without hindrance and was much facilitated by the fact that during the whole period of Fāṭimid rule in Egypt Ismāʿilism was merely the state religion of the country, being professed

by the ruling family and people at the court but with little following among the population. In political and military terms, the main difference between the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid periods lay in the internal distribution of power within the state, the formation of a new ruling elite and the creation of a new army totally unrelated to the old Fāṭimid military tradition. Although the Fāṭimid imams relinquished political power during the sixth/twelfth century, the Fāṭimid ruler had, until the very end of the dynasty, considerable liquid resources at his disposal and the court played a key political role.¹⁸ The military dictators in the Fāṭimid state failed to establish an independent legitimacy and their absolute powers were presented as rooted in a delegation of authority by the imam. For example, in inscriptions on buildings and fortifications commissioned by Badr al-Jamālī, he is referred to as the client (*fatā*) of al-Mustaṣṣir, and al-Mustaṣṣir's patronymic (*nisba*) was bestowed on him. The terminology of patronage was employed to describe the supposed subordination of Badr to the Fāṭimid ruler. In reality, Badr's title *Amīr al-Juyūsh* (Commander of the Armies) became his patronymic and his military slaves and properties were designated by it.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the fact that Badr consented to be publicly depicted as the *fatā* of al-Mustaṣṣir is very revealing. The military viziers of the sixth/twelfth century, including al-Afdāl, failed to create networks of people with enduring loyalty and vested interests in the existence of their regimes. Saladin managed to legitimise his rule and to create 'a functioning political system', to use an expression coined by R. Stephen Humphreys.²⁰ The Ayyūbid political system was marked by considerable sharing of powers between the sultan and his high-ranking *amīrs* and top administrators. Saladin's dismantling of the palace complex and the dispersal of the court were more than symbolic acts since they signified a real political change in the state.

Saladin's beginnings were marred by many difficulties and the question of political legitimisation posed a serious problem. The political authority of the Fāṭimid imam, also referred to as the Commander of the Believers, was perceived as religiously sanctioned and he considered himself to be the divinely chosen ruler. These concepts prevailed throughout the Fāṭimid period and are neatly illustrated by the *rasā'il* (epistolary writings) of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (464–542/1071–1147), which reaffirmed the notion that Fāṭimid imams are God's deputies.²¹ Saladin and the Ayyūbids did not claim direct explicit divine authority. They claimed to enjoy God's assistance and derived their legitimacy from their commitment and participation in the holy war, their support of the 'Abbāsīd caliph and the services rendered him, and being champions of justice. The Ayyūbid sultan al-ʿĀdil (the Just), for example, was referred to as *al-mu'ayyad*

(literally, supported and by implication divinely supported), the sultan of Islam and the Muslims who commands armies, fights the unbelievers and is the friend of the 'Abbāsid caliph.²² Justice was a common Muslim political and ethical value and the only concept shared by the two different Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid systems of political legitimisation.

Until the death of Nūr al-Dīn in 570/1174, Saladin had to suppress any desire to manifest openly his political ambitions. He ruled Egypt independently, but avoided any public rift with Nūr al-Dīn, his formal overlord. Upon Nūr al-Dīn's death, Saladin made his ambitions known and sought justification for his impending war against Nūr al-Dīn's heirs in Syria. Saladin in his drive for legitimacy sought to receive 'Abbāsid authorisation and presented his future campaigns in Syria as a necessary preparatory stage for wars against the Franks. He presented himself as an 'Abbāsid servant and warrior of the holy war. Although Saladin fought other Muslim potentates for many years of his reign, his achievements in the holy war – the victory at Ḥaṭṭīn and the conquest of Jerusalem – won him fame and he became a legend in his own lifetime. Only rarely is the non-mythical Saladin discernible.²³

Saladin's personal contribution to the creation of the Ayyūbid state was immense and his personal charisma made it a viable political entity. In the absence of strong central administration, the assignments of *iqṭā'*s 'became the most crucial factor for maintaining the Ayyūbid state order', to quote Sato Tsugitaka's observation.²⁴ The power to distribute *iqṭā'*s lay with Saladin and he had to balance three conflicting tendencies: the wish to have his sons inheriting his rule, the need to secure the co-operation of his brothers and the extended family, and the need to reward loyal *amīrs*. Territorial expansion was vital for maintaining internal stability and satisfying the urge of the ruling elite for wealth, power and status. When faced with conflicting interests between his familial personal concerns and the demands of his extended family and the expectations of the *amīrs*, Saladin 'subordinated money to men', as it has been aptly put by Malcom Cameron Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson.²⁵ This policy left him in penury but made the others indebted and earned him fame as generous. The extent of Saladin's political achievement is reflected by the fact that his state did not collapse under the onslaught of the Third Crusade and displayed cohesion in face of repeated military defeats.

Saladin's engagements in Syria and his wars against the Franks kept him away from Egypt for long periods of time, and in 578/1182 he left Egypt and never returned to it. Until 579/1183 Egypt was ruled by Saladin's elderly brother al-Mālik al-ʿĀdil. Between 579/1183 and 582/1186, Saladin's nephew Taqī al-Dīn ʿUmar ruled Egypt as regent for Saladin's son al-Afdāl. In 582/1186,

the government of Egypt was again in the hands of al-ʿĀdil who acted as regent for al-Mālik al-ʿAzīz ʿUthmān, another son of Saladin. At the time of Saladin's death in 589/1193, al-ʿĀdil was serving as governor of Jazīra and Diyār Bakr, and al-Mālik al-ʿAzīz with the support of Saladin's corps and *amīrs* became the master of Egypt. He died in 595/1198 and the nominal rule of his son, a nine-year-old boy, lasted only a year. In 596/1199, al-ʿĀdil conquered Egypt and was declared sultan of Syria and Egypt. He died in 615/1218 and his son al-Kāmil became the new sultan of Egypt. Al-Kāmil was deeply involved in the affairs of Ayyūbid Syria and was frequently absent from Egypt. Following al-Kāmil's death in 635/1238, Egypt was ruled by his son al-Mālik al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, who gained control of the country in 637/1240 and ruled until 647/1249. Al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb died at a crucial moment in the history of Ayyūbid Egypt on the battlefield of al-Manṣūra, while fighting the Crusade of Louis IX. His widow, Shajar al-Durr, with the help of the commander-in-chief of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's army and a small number of other people, concealed his death and sent for Tūrānshāh, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's son, who was in Ḥiṣn Kayfā on the Upper Tigris. Against all odds, their actions were successful: Tūrānshāh arrived at al-Manṣūra and saw the defeat of Louis IX. However, Ayyūbid rule in Egypt was doomed, because of the animosity aroused between Tūrānshāh and al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's military slaves, who killed him and invested Shajar al-Durr as the *sultāna* of Egypt.²⁶

Army and military institutions

As epitomised by the events that ultimately brought Ayyūbid rule in Egypt to its end, army and military institutions played a crucial role in the history of Ayyūbid Egypt and the history of the Ayyūbid confederacy as a larger political entity. The creator of the Ayyūbid army was Saladin and the army he built was an exclusively cavalry force composed of Turks and Kurds. It was a small and expensive army that was maintained through the *iqṭāʿ* system. For Saladin's military build-up in Egypt we have three different accounts: the first concerns a military review held in Cairo in 567/1171, the second refers to Saladin's army on the eve of its defeat at the battle of Mont Gisard (573/1177) and the third comes from the year 577/1181. In 567/1171, Saladin displayed his army made up of former Fāṭimid elements and new regiments in Cairo in front of Byzantine and Frankish emissaries. The army consisted of 167 *ṭulbs*, of which 147 were present at the parade. The *ṭulb* was a tactical formation whose strength varied from 70 to 100 to up to 200 horsemen. In all, 14,000 cavalry paraded and most of the troops belonged to the *ṭawāshī* category while the rest were

qarāghulāms. The archbishop William of Tyre, a renowned historian of the Outremer, writes that Saladin brought 26,000 troops to the battle of Mont Gisard, but only 8,000 of these were *ṭawāshī* and the rest were lightly armed *qarāghulāms*. The most instructive set of figures refers to Saladin's budget of 577/1181. The military pay roll included 8,640 cavalry of which 6,976 were *ṭawāshī* and 1,535 *qarāghulāms*, while the officer corps consisted of 111 *amīrs*. For the upkeep of the army 3,670,000 dinars were allocated and additional sums were paid to Bedouins. The army, including the Bedouins, was paid through the *iqṭā'* system.²⁷

In comparison to the Fāṭimid period, the Ayyūbids of Egypt and Syria made a very limited use of infantry and their standing army (*ʿaskar*) was made up of cavalry only. For example, al-Muʿazzam ʿĪsā had a small high-quality cavalry force of 3,000 while the Ayyūbid rulers of Egypt had between 7,000 and 12,000 cavalry at their disposal. An insight into the military resources that were available to the Ayyūbid rulers of Egypt is offered by al-Nuwayrī's account of al-Mālik al-ʿAzīz's campaign into Syria in 590/1194. Al-Nuwayrī (677–733/1279–1333) writes that al-Mālik al-ʿAzīz left Cairo with a force of 2,000 cavalry made up of 1,000 troops of the *ḥalqa* (to be discussed below) and another regiment of 1,000 troops commanded by twenty-seven *amīrs*. He left an unspecified number of troops in Cairo and sent a garrison of 700 cavalry commanded by thirteen *amīrs* to Alexandria and Damietta.²⁸ Ayyūbid armies were regularly augmented by nomads and occasionally by volunteers. The military role of the Bedouins was restricted, and therefore other nomadic groups such as Kurds, Turcomans and Khwarizmians were preferred. Volunteers for the holy war and other irregulars fought in the battles of Saladin as well as other Ayyūbid rulers and were called up by al-Kāmil to fight the Fifth Crusade, although their military value was negligible.

In contrast with the Fāṭimid period, the institution of military slavery played a minor role under the Ayyūbids and the servile component in the Ayyūbid armies was small. Surprisingly, the only contemporary sixth/twelfth-century description of military slavery is provided by William of Tyre. According to him, this institution utilised three sources of manpower: young prisoners-of-war, slaves bought in the slave-markets and the offspring of slave-mothers. William of Tyre says that they were trained in the art of war, and adult military slaves (*mamlūks*) received pay and large possessions, according to their merits. The military role of the *mamlūks* was to protect their master during battle, and victory depended largely on the military performance of the *mamlūks*.²⁹

In many ways, the period of Saladin's rule was not conducive to a flourishing of the institution of military slavery. Some of the conditions necessary for its proper functioning such as reliable sources for the supply of slaves and economic prosperity were lacking. Saladin spent most of his time on battlefields and had little time to supervise the training of his *mamlūks*. The location of the installations associated with military slavery remains unknown. It seems that only the *ḥalqa* can be described as a unit composed of military slaves. It was Saladin's private corps and its existence is attested from a very early period of Saladin's rule.³⁰ William of Tyre alludes to its presence at the battle of Mont Gisard by saying that 1,000 elite troops served as Saladin's bodyguard. They, like Saladin himself, wore a distinctive yellow silk costume over their armour. However, on other occasions, Saladin's *ḥalqa* was treated like any other military division and performed the task of advance guard in rotation with other units. During the siege of Jaffa (588/1192), the *ḥalqa* performed poorly and aroused the anger of the Kurds.³¹

To what extent other Ayyūbid rulers cultivated military slaves is an open question. The Ashrafiyya corps, for example, is sometimes referred to as composed of military slaves (*mamlūks*), but this characterisation cannot be accepted without some reservations. The political involvement of the Ashrafiyya, after the death of the sultan al-Kāmil, is well known and al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb who became the sultan of Egypt saw them as a threat to his rule. In 638/1240, a year after he gained control of Egypt, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb took actions against the *amīrs* of the Ashrafiyya and deprived them of their *iqṭā's*. In fact, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb was the founder of the most famous slave corps in Ayyūbid history: the Baḥrī regiment. The Baḥriyya was composed of Turkish military slaves and was designated to serve as the mainstay of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's regime. It numbered only 800 to 1,000 *mamlūks* and was stationed at the citadel on the Jazīra island opposite Cairo, which was built by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb as the seat of his government. They fought well in the battle of Manṣūra but felt threatened by Tūrānshāh, who unwisely alienated them.³²

Al-Nuwayrī quotes in his chronicle a text described by him as the 'political testament' of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. The text is cast in the form of advice-instructions given by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb to his son Tūrānshāh and its authenticity is questionable, but it may provide explanations for some of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's policies. Tūrānshāh was advised to trust the *mamlūks* of his father, while the Turkish *amīrs* were accused of allowing the entry of simple people with no military training into the ranks of the army. Perhaps al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's cultivation of military slaves was motivated by both political and military reasons. His aim was to create a corps politically loyal to him and, at the same time, to improve

the fighting capability of his army. But his advice was not entirely consistent, as in the same breath he recommended that his son treat the *amīrs* well and to expand their *iqṭāʿ*s in exchange for their commitment to increase the number of the troops they were obliged to provide for the sultan. Political reliance on military slaves had its price, however.³³ The death of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb deprived them of their master and as complete outsiders they had to fend for themselves as best as they could. Perhaps they could somehow relate to Shajar al-Durr, who was of Turkish extraction as they were and presented continuity and stability in contrast to an uncertain future under Tūrānshāh.

The *amīrs* were not the only ones criticised by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. The officials of the Office of Army were accused of obstructing the payment of the *amīrs* by dividing their *iqṭāʿ*s among widely scattered locations. Al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb characterised these officials as Copts who deliberately sought to undermine the strength of the army. These accusations reflected an anti-Coptic mood characteristic of Ayyūbid Egypt, a period which saw the circulation of vicious anti-Christian propaganda. The truth of these accusations is hardly an issue. What is significant is the light they throw on the importance of the *iqṭāʿ* as the main financial tool for maintaining the army. The existence of military *iqṭāʿ*, i.e. granting to *amīrs* the right to collect taxes in the rural areas in lieu of salary, is well known and attested to by a variety of sources. In Fāṭimid Egypt, however, military *iqṭāʿ* was only one form of maintaining the army. Usually, the army received cash payments in several instalments over the year and in other cases black slave troops were settled on land. Saladin expanded the system of military *iqṭāʿ* and eventually it became the main, if not the only, way of maintaining the army. This trend is exemplified by the use of the word *khubz* (bread) as synonymous with military *iqṭāʿ*. In contrast to the Fāṭimid period, in the Ayyūbid period the *muqṭaʿ* (the holder of the *iqṭāʿ*) did not pay the tithe. The value of the *iqṭāʿ* was calculated according to the annual average income (*ʿibra*) of the fief, and paid in *dīnār jayshī*, a monetary unit of account. The *amīrs*, according to the value of their *iqṭāʿ*, were obliged to maintain a certain number of cavalry troops.³⁴

In Ayyūbid Egypt, members of the Ayyūbid family held vast territories designated as an *iqṭāʿ al-khāṣṣa* and they were also entitled to collect non-agricultural taxes. In 565/1169, Saladin's father was granted Alexandria, the Buḥayra province of the eastern Delta and Damietta as *iqṭāʿ*, while Saladin's brother Tūrānshāh received as *iqṭāʿ* the towns of Qūs and Aswān in Upper Egypt and ʿAydhāb on the Red Sea. Tūrānshāh's *iqṭāʿ* yielded annual average income of 266,000 dinars but this was apparently insufficient for his needs since later he received additional *iqṭāʿ*s in Egypt.³⁵ Saladin skilfully manipulated

the *iqṭāʿ* system to serve his goals. He weakened the Fāṭimid army by depriving the Fāṭimid *amīrs* of their *iqṭāʿ*s while distributing them among his men. He could achieve this only through the co-operation of Fāṭimid administrators in two of the relevant offices that dealt with *iqṭāʿ* in the Fāṭimid period: the Office of Army and Office of the *iqṭāʿ*. What was the extent of Saladin's own *iqṭāʿ*s in Egypt remains unknown and the data concerning the revenues derived from Egypt under Saladin's rule are sparse and difficult to work with. Qāḍī al-Fāḍil says that in 585/1189 the annual estimated revenue of Egypt from Alexandria to ʿAydḥāb was 4,600,035 dinars. Apparently, this sum refers to provinces under the *iqṭāʿ* system since he uses the term *ʿibra* and says that there were additional sources of income.³⁶ However, it would be highly misleading to assume that Saladin controlled the vast majority of the revenues of Egypt. Three years later, in 588/1192, the income of the office of the sultan's Private Purse (*diwān al-khāṣṣ*) was only 354,444 dinars. Al-ʿĀdil's income from Egypt was higher. In 578/1183, when he left the governorship of Egypt in favour of Taqī ʿl-Dīn the annual income from his *iqṭāʿ* was 700,000 dinars. In 615/1218, when al-ʿĀdil died, there were 700,000 dinars in his treasury and an additional sum was kept at the fortress of Kerak.³⁷

The military *iqṭāʿ* had profound repercussions on the administrative and military structure of Ayyūbid Egypt. In order to derive incomes from their *iqṭāʿ*s, the *amīrs*, including the sultan, had to employ administrative staff. What could have been the relations between the state administration and the private administrative manpower of the *amīrs* is not mentioned in the sources. Perhaps the division of the *amīrs'* *iqṭāʿ*s among several locations was an attempt of the state administrators to maintain power in their hands and to keep the *amīrs* and their staff dependent on them. The pattern of military campaigns was also influenced by the *iqṭāʿ* system. From the point of view of the *muqṭaʿ* his presence on the *iqṭāʿ* during harvest time was essential. Therefore campaigning was possible only after the harvest during the summer months and must have ended soon enough to allow the *amīrs* to return to their *iqṭāʿ*s. The Franks faced the same problems and constraints.

Egypt and the wars of the Crusades

During the Fāṭimid period, Egypt's involvement in the wars of the Crusades was limited and sporadic, it posed no economic burden, and the ideology of *jihad* played no role in the Fāṭimid policy towards the Franks. Between 492/1099 and 504/1110, the Fāṭimids lost Jerusalem and all of the Mediterranean coastal towns except for Tyre and Ascalon. In 517/1123, the Fāṭimids invaded

Palestine with ground and naval forces and suffered a humiliating defeat at the battle of Yabne (Ibelin) while their fleet was defeated by a Venetian squadron off the coast of al-ʿArīsh. The failure at the battle of Ascalon in 492/1099 and the two defeats in 517/1123 had a debilitating effect on the Fāṭimid will to fight the Crusaders. In 549/1154, owing to internal power struggles in Cairo, the Fāṭimids lost Ascalon to the Franks and their ability to send armies to Palestine was impaired. In 552/1157 and again in 553/1158, the Fāṭimid military vizier Ṭalāʿī ibn Ruzzīk launched naval and ground incursions against the Franks, but rejected Nūr al-Dīn's exhortations to wage with him holy war against the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem. Ṭalāʿī ibn Ruzzīk preferred to pay the Franks a modest annual tribute of 33,000 dinars and to maintain a truce with them. The invasions of Egypt by the Franks between 560/1164 and 565/1169 were a result of attendant circumstances. The vizier Shāwar in his private bid for power managed to involve both Nūr al-Dīn and the kingdom of Jerusalem in the affairs of Egypt and to bring them to fight on Egyptian soil for his interests.

The lure of Egypt cast a powerful spell on the Crusader kingdom and the Franks needed few external inducements to get involved in Fāṭimid internal affairs. The Franks gathered economic information and possessed a list of Egyptian villages with the incomes derived from them. On the eve of the 564/1168 invasion of Egypt, Amalric, the king of Jerusalem, made various promises to his vassals and allies concerning future grants of fiefs in Egypt.³⁸ The rulers of both Damascus and Jerusalem considered the conquest of Egypt to be a feasible undertaking within their reach. The ultimate failure of the Franks was a reflection of their restricted military resources and tactical mistakes. On 2 Ṣafar 564/5 November 1168, the Franks conquered Bilbays and massacred the population. Contemporary Jewish sources tell a grim story of the fate of the survivors, who were put on sale in the slave-markets of Palestine.³⁹ The conduct of the Franks inspired awe and brought Shāwar to take irrational steps: on 9 Ṣafar 564/12 November 1168 he set Fustāt on fire. He was afraid that the Franks advancing from Bilbays would use Fustāt as a springboard for the conquest of Cairo. Cairo, however, was a fortified town and considerable military forces were stationed in it, and an all-out attack on the town was beyond Amalric's military means. Amalric found himself in a difficult situation. While fighting against Cairo, he faced the appearance of Nūr al-Dīn's sizeable force to the rear. The withdrawal of Amalric from Egypt (Rabīʿ II 564/January 1169) paved the way for the eventual Ayyūbid takeover.

One of Saladin's lessons from the Frankish invasions of Egypt between 560/1164 and 565/1169 was the need to fortify the capital, Fustāt-Cairo. In 566/1171, the damaged walls of Cairo were repaired and Saladin embarked on an

ambitious project of encircling the capital by a single wall. The works began in 572/1176 and were never completed, but in 604/1207 the building of the citadel was finished. The citadel was built on the Muqāṭṭam Hill on a site which contained small mosques and tombs that were destroyed, but the stone needed for the construction work was procured from dismantling small pyramids at Giza. The citadel became the seat of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk sultans of Egypt. Another concern of Saladin was the defence of Egypt's towns on the Mediterranean coast. In Šafar 565/October 1169, a Byzantine fleet supported by the ground forces of the kingdom of Jerusalem converged on Damietta. The Byzantine fleet was composed of galleys, ships adapted for amphibious landing of cavalry on beaches and transport ships. The siege came to nothing, because of deep mistrust between the Franks and the Byzantines, and severe winter storms aggravated the situation of the besieging forces. In Dhu'l-Ḥijja 569/July 1174, the Normans of Sicily attacked Alexandria. According to Arabic sources, the Norman fleet brought an expeditionary force of 50,000 men and a great quantity of equipment, including catapults which shot black stones brought from Sicily especially for that purpose. The defenders, however, put up a strong and effective resistance and the siege was discontinued after two weeks.⁴⁰ These two sieges demonstrated the vast naval resources that were available to the Christian Mediterranean powers. In spite of his previous unfamiliarity with the sea and maritime issues, Saladin understood Egypt's naval needs and was ready to invest in the defence of the coastal towns and rebuilding the navy. During his reign, fortification works were carried out in Alexandria, Damietta and Tinnīs and warships were constructed in Cairo. Ibn Abī Ṭayy (575–630/1179–1232), the historian of Aleppo, claims that Saladin's naval programme began in 572/1176 and involved the building of galleys and recruitment of naval personnel. Al-Maqrīzī writes that Saladin established the Office of Navy and allocated several sources of revenue for its needs.⁴¹ Saladin's greatest naval achievement was the rebuilding of the navy in Egypt, and his fleets raided Christian shipping off the Palestine coast and were also involved in siege operations against coastal towns. However, the overall performance of Saladin's navy was poor. It suffered a humiliating defeat off Tyre in 583/1187 and found itself trapped inside the port of Acre during the protracted battle for the town (585–7/1189–91).⁴² With the fall of Acre numerous ships and galleys were lost.

Al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb was very aware of the importance of naval power when fighting the Crusades and in his political testament he urged his son to pay attention to the navy. However, his own testimony reveals that the navy was seriously underpaid and its manpower was of poor quality.⁴³ During the

Ayyūbid period no effective navy existed and therefore the coast of Egypt was exposed to Christian sea-borne attacks. Tinnīs, for example, was abandoned in 585/1189 and eventually destroyed in 624/1227, and Damietta was conquered during the Fifth Crusade of St Louis.

In Rabīʿ I 615/May 1218, the army of the Fifth Crusade established a bridge-head west of Damietta, but it conquered the town only in 616/1219. The death of Sultan al-ʿĀdil in Syria in Jumādā II 615/August 1218 sparked off a rebellion against al-Kāmil by one of his leading *amīrs*, the Kurd Ibn al-Mashṭūb, whose aim was to install al-Kāmil's younger brother al-Fāʿiz Ibrāhīm as the Ayyūbid sultan of Egypt. Al-Kāmil abandoned his military camp opposite Damietta and fled south to the small town of Ashmūn Ṭannāh. The flight of the sultan scattered his forces and the Crusaders seized the Muslim camp with its supplies and equipment. The situation was saved by the timely arrival of al-Kāmil's brother, al-Muʿazzam ʿĪsā, with reinforcements from Syria. Al-Muʿazzam restored order in al-Kāmil's camp: he exiled both Ibn al-Mashṭūb and Fāʿiz Ibrāhīm to Syria and ordered the demolition of the walls of Jerusalem.

It was a desperate and highly unpopular move, driven by al-Muʿazzam's fear that the Franks might conquer the town and entrench themselves in it. The fall of Damietta brought al-Kāmil to renew his offer of a peace treaty by which he would grant the Franks extensive territories in Palestine, including Jerusalem, for the return of Damietta. The papal legate Pelagius of Albano – who waited in vain for the arrival of Frederick II – rejected al-Kāmil's peace offer. Only in 618/1221 did the Crusaders begin advancing south from Damietta towards Cairo, but their advance came to a halt opposite al-Manṣūra, while Muslim forces blocked their means of retreat to Damietta. Eventually, the army of the Fifth Crusade surrendered and left Egypt on 19 Rajab 618/30 August 1221.

Al-Kāmil's readiness to cede Jerusalem, which was not disputed by al-Muʿazzam, set the precedent for the way al-Kāmil dealt with the threat of Frederick II's Crusade in 626–7/1228–9. Frederick II's advanced force landed in 625/1227 in Acre and in the same year al-Muʿazzam died, leaving Damascus under the rule of his young and inexperienced son, al-Nāṣir Daʿūd. Al-Kāmil was trying to attain two parallel goals: to negotiate a peace treaty with Frederick II and to dislodge al-Nāṣir Daʿūd from Damascus. During the summer of 626/1228 al-Kāmil seized Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus from al-Nāṣir Daʿūd, and in 627/1229 he reached an agreement with Frederick II. Al-Kāmil ceded Jerusalem, except for the Temple Mount (al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf), and territories along the route from Acre to Jerusalem. Al-Nāṣir Daʿūd tried to create a popular outcry against the agreement, which was also resisted by the

population of Jerusalem that felt forced to leave the town. On the whole, al-Kāmil's appeasement policy towards Frederick II paid off. He avoided military confrontation with him and was able to dislodge al-Nāṣir Da'ūd from Damascus (summer 627/1229).⁴⁴ Although the territories held by the Franks in Palestine stretched from Tripoli to Jaffa, they lacked depth and the position of the Franks in Jerusalem was untenable. In 637/1239, al-Nāṣir Da'ūd, who lost Damascus but received in compensation Transjordan, restored Muslim rule in Jerusalem.⁴⁵ The desire to regain Jerusalem was the driving force behind the Crusade of St Louis, whose army took Damietta in 647/1249. The fall of the town started the chain of events that ultimately brought about the demise of Ayyūbid rule in Egypt.

The wars of the Crusades exacted a heavy price from the Ayyūbid rulers of Egypt who, on the whole, were more successful in defending Egypt than their Fāṭimid predecessors. This relative success was a result of historical circumstances and the strength of the Ayyūbid army. The Christian campaigns against Damietta were an attempt to make the most of the European naval advantage, but also reflected the lack of a secure territorial base in Palestine and the absence of adequate local military resources. Everything had to be brought from Europe: troops, equipment and supplies. Saladin's victory at Ḥaṭṭīn and the collapse of the kingdom of Jerusalem had long-term consequences and made any attempt to recreate the kingdom and hold Jerusalem impossible.

Ayyūbid armies proved to be far more capable of resisting the Franks than the Fāṭimid army ever had been, and this was due to Saladin's military policy that was continued by other Ayyūbid sultans. When the military aspects of the wars of the Crusades are considered, it must be emphasised that the Crusader and Muslim armies of the Fāṭimid-Ayyūbid period were constructed differently. The main military asset of the Franks was the close co-operation between infantry and cavalry and the cavalry charge delivered by the knights. The Fāṭimids maintained a large army of tens of thousands whose main task was to keep the regime in power. To achieve this aim, black slave infantry was instrumental, but the army as a whole was ridden by ethnic animosities and this led to lack of cohesion. Fāṭimid armies that fought the Crusaders performed poorly and were easily defeated. The Muslim armies of the Zangid and Ayyūbid period fought as mounted archers capable of shooting massive volleys of arrows. The different styles of warfare of the Franks and the Muslims were well understood by the Zangid sultan Nūr al-Dīn (541-70/1146-74) of Syria, who is quoted as saying that the arrows of the Turks were the only effective weapon against the knights and their way of fighting.⁴⁶ The

Ayyūbid armies, although small, were cohesive when fighting the Franks and were, on the whole, successful.

Egypt's international trade and economy

The Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt was a turning point in the development of Egypt's position as a Mediterranean trading power. During the North African phase of the Fāṭimid state (298–358/909–69), trade relations were established between the Fāṭimids and Amalfi, and Amalfitian merchants followed the Fāṭimids to Egypt.⁴⁷ In 386/996, for example, 160 Amalfitians who stayed in Cairo were killed in riots and goods worth 90,000 dinars were looted from them. The Fāṭimid authorities made every effort to return the looted goods to those who survived the riots and to punish the looters. They put to death Muslims suspected of rioting and looting. The way the Fāṭimids dealt with the riots reveals that they were protecting vital state interests and strove to convince the Amalfitians that the regime would protect them. The executions were instrumental in conveying this message to both the Amalfitians and the local population.⁴⁸ In the long term the Fāṭimid damage-control effort proved successful and throughout the fifth/eleventh century Italian and Byzantine merchants regularly visited Egypt.

The massive presence of Amalfitian traders and the high estimate of the goods looted from them can be understood as indicating that by the end of the fourth/tenth century the trade links between Egypt and India were already established. Two accounts from the period of al-Mu'izz and al-'Azīz support this assumption. Al-Mu'izz during his rule in Egypt (363–5/973–5) ordered the purchase of a high-quality Abnūs wood and his order was handled by a merchant named al-Sawādikī, who carried it out through his commercial connections in Ḥijāz and Aden. The quantity requested by al-Mu'izz is not specified, but it took more than two months to supply the wood that was shipped from Aden to al-Qulzum. The Abnūs wood grows in Ethiopia and India and was known in Antiquity to both the Jews and the Greeks, and it is quite possible that the wood requested was supplied from Ethiopia. The second report, however, is far more explicit about the commercial ties between Egypt and India. In 385/995, al-'Azīz received aloewood (ʿūd, used for medical purposes) as a present from India.⁴⁹ As scant as the evidence of the Arabic sources is, it points out that towards the end of the fourth/tenth century Egypt's trade with India was a commercial reality, and this throws new light on the significance of the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt. During the North African period of the Fāṭimid state a local commercial

system emerged: it connected southern Italy, Sicily and Tunisia, and within this system Amalfi played an important role. The Amalfitians followed the Fāṭimids to Egypt where they got access to spices and Indian goods, and the result was expansion of trade in both volume and value. What began as a restricted local system turned into a truly Mediterranean trade system. Another point that must be considered is the role of Byzantium in the fourth/tenth-century Mediterranean trade. As has been pointed out by David Jacoby, Egypt's trade with Byzantium during the fourth/tenth century prior to the Fāṭimid conquest was far more extensive than usually assumed.⁵⁰ The Fāṭimids in Tunisia maintained complex relations with the Byzantines, which involved military and naval confrontations as well as diplomatic contacts. The Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt and their expansion into Palestine and Syria turned northern Syria into a zone of confrontation between the Fāṭimids and Byzantium. Although throughout the Middle Ages war and commerce were not mutually exclusive, the hostilities between the Fāṭimids and the Byzantines were not conducive to making the Byzantines the main Fāṭimid trading partners. The small town of Amalfi, unlike Byzantium, neither posed a threat to the Fāṭimids nor challenged their expansion in the eastern Mediterranean and this facilitated Fāṭimid–Amalfi trade relations. Amalfi benefited from its position as a promoter of trade with the Muslim world and, at the same time, maintained good trade relations with Byzantium.⁵¹

From the fifth/eleventh century onwards the Mediterranean trade of Egypt vastly expanded and Italian and Byzantine merchants became the main trading partners of both the Fāṭimids and the Ayyūbids. Egypt served as a land bridge for the trade between India and the Mediterranean, and spices and other Indian products attracted Muslim, Jewish and Christian merchants to Alexandria and Cairo. The period of the Mediterranean trade during the fifth/eleventh to seventh/thirteenth centuries is well known through the Jewish documents of the Cairo Geniza and the monumental studies of S. D. Goitein and other Geniza scholars, notable among them Abraham L. Udovitch, Menahem Ben-Sasson, Norman A. Stillman, Moshe Gil, Ṣabīḥ ʿAwdah and most recently Miriam Frenkel. The documents known as the Cairo Geniza have their origin in the Jewish tradition, which regards writings in which the name of God appears as sacred and requiring to be buried. The Geniza chamber of the synagogue in Fuṣṭāṭ served as the burial room for every kind of writing which originated within the Jewish community of Fuṣṭāṭ, including letters of traders written in Judaeo-Arabic, and occasionally Arabic. The contribution of the Arabic sources must not be ignored. The most important are the administrative texts of al-Makhzūmī and Ibn

Mammātī, which have been studied by Claude Cahen, Hassanein Rabie and Richard Stefan Cooper. These texts provide information on the taxes levied on traders in Egypt and reflect the economic significance of this trade for the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid rulers.

It is impossible to provide a full picture of the Mediterranean trade here, but three points must be emphasised. (1) The Fāṭimid expansion in Palestine and Syria also integrated the ports of the eastern Mediterranean in the Fāṭimid trade network. The testimony of the Geniza documents and the account of the Persian traveller Nāṣir-i Khusraw (439/1047) provide compelling evidence for the commercial importance of towns such as Tripoli and Tyre which were frequented by Muslim and Christian merchants and the Fāṭimid rulers maintained there their own commercial interests.⁵² (2) The sixth/twelfth to seventh/thirteenth-century commerce of Alexandria was very extensive. The volume and the significance of the commercial traffic that went through Alexandria is mirrored by the presence of 3,000 European and other merchants in the town in 608/1211 and the close commercial relations that al-ʿĀdil maintained with a Venetian merchant.⁵³ (3) For Egypt's Mediterranean trade to prosper, the parties involved had to be flexible and frequently they were faced by difficult dilemma. Arabic sources reflect full awareness of the role of Genoa in the fall of the coastal towns of Palestine and Syria during the Crusades and Qāḍī al-Fāḍil in a letter to Baghdad in 570/1174 referred to the Italians as both enemies and trading partners. Europeans also had to make their choices: much to their dislike, they supplied Egypt with essential naval and military supplies, including military slaves.⁵⁴

The focus on trade should not obscure the fact that the wealth of the country depended on the agricultural output. In normal years Egypt's agriculture produced great annual surpluses of grain and flax for export. How the household grain-economy of the Fāṭimid regime worked is known from al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*. Al-Maqrīzī, in his account, combined information derived from Ibn al-Ma'mūn (d. 588/1192) and Ibn Ṭuwayr. State lands were scattered all over Egypt and grain for the use of the court was shipped to Cairo, but other shipments went to Alexandria, Tinnīs and Damietta. From these towns grain was shipped to Tyre and Ascalon. Tyre until its fall to the Crusaders in 518/1124 received 70,000 *irdabbs* of grain annually, while Ascalon (lost to the Crusaders in 548/1153) received 50,000 *irdabbs*. In Cairo the regime stored 300,000 *irdabbs* of grain in several granaries (*makhāzin*). The regime allocated its grain to the employees of the state and the court, to those who were entitled to state-sponsored charities, to the black corps of the army and navy, and to the royal Guest House. One should add the grain sent annually to

the Holy Cities of Arabia to this list. The grain intended for consumption by the ruler and his family was ground at special mills operated by slave-girls of the palace. The Fāṭimids maintained a fleet of Nile boats that shipped grain and wood needed by the regime to Cairo. Altogether the Fāṭimids had one million *irdabbs* of grain at their disposal.⁵⁵

What the accounts of Ibn al-Ma'mūn and Ibn Ṭuwayr describe is how the household grain-economy of the Fāṭimid regime worked. Parallel to this system operated the grain free market. However, the household grain-economy of the Fāṭimid regime and the free market were not strictly separated systems. The grain policy of the regime, as exemplified by the operation of the *matjar*, had a profound impact on the free market. This term is widely attested to during the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period and is generally understood as meaning the Office of Commerce. In the Fāṭimid period, the *matjar* bought grain on the free market and later sold it for profit. In 444/1052, the vizier al-Yāzūrī urged al-Mustansir to abolish the grain purchases carried out by the *matjar*, arguing that these were not always profitable. He advised that the *matjar* practice should be implemented in respect of non-perishable goods such as wood, soap, iron, lead and honey.⁵⁶ The Ayyūbid grain policy must have been similar to that of the Fāṭimids and, as borne out by the writings of al-Qalqashandī, the realities of the Mamlūk age closely resembled those of the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period.⁵⁷

Large segments of the urban population, if not the majority, lived at subsistence level. Bread was the staple and for many the only food available. When freshly harvested grain arrived at the grain ports of Cairo it was taxed. The taxation of grain is widely documented for the whole period of the middle ages. In the free market several professional groups operated: at the highest level we find the wheat merchants (*qammāḥūn*) and brokers (*samāsir*). The millers (*ṭaḥḥānūn*) and flour merchants (*daqqāqūn*) were buying wheat from the wheat merchants and brokers and selling it to people of the upper and middle middle class (if such terms can be used to describe medieval society). People of these classes often tried to buy the wheat needed for their annual household consumption and they had the means to bake bread for themselves. Other segments of the population – the lower middle class, the working class and the vast urban underclass – were dependent for their supplies of bread on the bread vendor (*khabbāz*) or the oven-owner (*farrān*). This dependency had serious drawbacks since the wheat market was almost always a buyer's market and prices of wheat and bread fluctuated sharply, while buying bread on the streets from the *khabbāz* was regarded as socially demeaning.

In the period under discussion, two large-scale famines occurred in Egypt: one in 414–15/1024–5 and the other between 595/1198 and 597/1200. When the Nile failed to reach its plenitude the effect was twofold: on the year it occurred – the current year – and of course on the next one. The shortages that occurred in the current year came about as the result of buying for the future or hoarding in preparation for an impending shortage. The actions of the government during the current year were of critical importance. The abolition of taxes on grain, temporarily, could have been an effective tool to combat rising prices of grain and bread. Medieval regimes, however, were very reluctant to abolish taxes on grain. For example, in 415/1025 taxes on grain were lifted only at the height of the famine, but this was too late to have any real effect on prices.⁵⁸ Another tool in the hands of the government was the declaration of maximum prices (*tas'ir*) for grain, flour and bread. This policy was usually implemented more readily, yet was ineffective and brought sales to a standstill. The most effective tool the government had to combat rising prices and shortage was the selling of grain from its own stocks and forcing people of the ruling class to do the same. These steps were taken during the famine of 595–7/1198–1200 when Sultan al-ʿĀdil distributed grain to the poor, and his example was followed by *amīrs* and people of means.⁵⁹

Famines were dreaded and horrific and caused immense human suffering. During the two famines of the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period people were reduced to cannibalism. The wider demographic impact of famines is, however, far more difficult to assess. The cumulative effect of the 595–7/1198–1200 famine was devastating and signs of depopulation in the capital and the rural areas were visible, but it cannot be said that this famine was responsible for the economic deterioration, not to say ultimate decline, of Ayyūbid Egypt.

The *matjar* continued to function throughout the Ayyūbid period and its two main aims were to secure a steady supply of strategic materials, such as timber and iron for the state, and levy taxes on European merchants which sold goods to the state. This office also monopolised the sale of alum to European merchants. This monopoly was motivated by the need to pay for strategic materials and the desire to minimise the outflow of gold from the Treasury.⁶⁰ The operation of the Office of Commerce throws some light on the economic policies of the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid regimes. Both regimes were deeply involved in the economic life of the country and used their political authority to secure the supply of agricultural products (grain and fodder) and manufactured goods (textiles and weapons) that the state needed. The production of inscribed textiles (*ṭirāz*) and luxurious fabrics came under close governmental supervision and partial monopoly. Certain inscribed textiles

were produced for the exclusive use of the Fāṭimid regime, which also supervised their delivery to Cairo. Textiles played an important role in the ceremonial and social life of the court, and the Fāṭimid regime bestowed garments on the employees of the state on a regular basis. The intervention of the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid regimes in Egypt's international trade aimed at maximisation of state incomes through taxation and the procurement of strategic materials that were available only through foreign traders. Parallel with the intervention of the rulers in trade they as well as other members of the ruling establishment were engaged in trade as private people seeking private gains. Furthermore, the ruling elite was also capable of coaxing the merchants into providing tax collection services for them.

Pious endowments, learning and welfare

The payment of *zakāt*, the obligatory alms-tax, constitutes one of the five Pillars of Islam, but *zakāt* did not evolve into any kind of social leveller and its handling by the state was a dismal failure. Data on its collection and distribution in medieval Islam is limited and we lack information concerning *zakāt* for the duration of the Fāṭimid period in Egypt. The earliest concrete information we have in Egypt dates from the beginning of Saladin's rule. In 570/1171, shortly after the demise of the Fāṭimid dynasty, Saladin ordered the distribution of *zakāt* among those who were entitled to it, such as the poor, travellers and insolvent debtors.⁶¹ Most of the accounts referring to *zakāt* in the Ayyūbid period deal with the way it was collected and not the way it was distributed, leaving the impression that it turned into yet another form of taxation.

In contrast to the paucity of information concerning *zakāt*, the sources contain abundant references to *ṣadaqa*, voluntary charity, and pious endowments (*waqf*/ḥubs, pl. *awqāf*/aḥbās). The notion of charity was deeply embedded in the ethics and religious thought of medieval Islam. The distribution of *ṣadaqa* by the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid rulers, especially on the occasion of religious festivals, is well attested in the sources. *Ṣadaqa* had many faces. On the personal level, the dispensation of charity was a way to implore God for deliverance and served as expiation for sins committed. Rulers used *ṣadaqa* as an expression of gratitude to God for victories and, on the public level, the distribution of charity was often politically motivated. *Ṣadaqa* must be discussed in conjunction with *waqf* since every pious endowment was by definition a charity dedicated for the sake of God. Legally, a property set apart as a pious endowment was considered as inalienable in perpetuity and became the property of God.

Some of the earliest surviving examples of pious endowment deeds (*waqfiyyāt*) are from Egypt and the pious endowment institution is relatively well documented for pre-Fāṭimid Egypt and throughout the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period. For example, one of the most renowned charitable persons of the fourth/tenth century was the vizier Abū Bakr al-Mādharaʿī, who owned extensive rural properties. He turned some of them into a pious endowment for the Holy Cities of Arabia. His endowment can be regarded as the forerunner of the *waqf al-Ḥaramayn* of the later middle ages.⁶² The earliest known Fāṭimid pious endowment is the *waqf* created by al-Ḥākim in 401/1010 for the Azhar Mosque in Cairo as well as other congregational mosques in the capital, including a teaching institution, *dār al-ḥikma*, that had been established in 365/975. The properties endowed were urban commercial properties in the capital city. In 405/1014, al-Ḥākim set up another pious endowment in support of Qurʾān reciters and muezzins at the congregational mosques of Fustāt–Cairo, the filling in of cisterns, the upkeep of a hospital and the provision of shrouds for the dead. The properties endowed were a mixture of urban commercial sites and rural estates and this combination was not fortuitous. The aim was to assure the longevity of the foundation by diversifying and spreading the properties between urban and rural locations and thus to provide a steady flow of revenues. The urban commercial properties generated income all year round, while rural lands only generated income after the harvest. Al-Ḥākim was also the first known ruler in Egypt who financed a teaching institution through the pious endowment system. In *dār al-ḥikma* there were several groups of scholars with different specialisations and the institution was provided with books from the palace library. Scholars could copy books there while the cost of paper, ink and the drinking water provided for the users was defrayed by al-Ḥākim.⁶³

It was Saladin, however, who institutionalised the use of the pious endowment system for the support of law colleges (*madrasas*) as a state policy. Saladin's first law colleges in Fustāt were established when he served as Fāṭimid vizier and were part of his policy to restore Sunnī Islam in Egypt and undermine the Fāṭimid state. Other Ayyūbid rulers and members of the military and civilian elite emulated Saladin's policy. Most of the Ayyūbid law colleges were founded in the capital and, as a result, many urban properties in Fustāt and Cairo and even some agricultural lands were tied up in pious endowments set up for these institutions. Others were built in the Fayyūm, but there is little evidence for setting up of law colleges in other towns or regions of Egypt. Saladin clearly preferred Shāfiʿī jurists and Ashʿarī theology but, during the Ayyūbid period, law colleges were also built for the Mālikīs,

Ḥanafīs and even Ḥanbalīs.⁶⁴ Although the study of charitable institutions in medieval Islam is in its infancy, some *waqf*-supported charitable institutions are known to exist in pre-Fāṭimid Egypt and others were set up during the Fāṭimid–Ayyūbid period. For example, Abū Bakr al-Mādhārāʾī built in the Qarāfa, the area of the cemeteries around the capital, a lodge (*ribāṭ*) for *ashrāf* women (i.e. the descendants of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the two sons of ʿAlī and Fāṭima), which was supported by a pious endowment. This indicates that it provided not only housing, but also food to its occupants.⁶⁵ Sharīfs (*ashrāf*) were also the beneficiaries of a pious endowment set up by the Fāṭimid vizier Ṭalāʿī ibn Ruzzīk in 556/1160.⁶⁶ The most impressive charitable institution in pre-Fāṭimid Egypt was, however, the hospital build in 261/875 by Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn in Fustāṭ. A rich pious endowment was dedicated for its upkeep and it was designated for the exclusive use of the civilian population, with no entrance given to Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn's military slaves. In the Ṭūlūnid hospital there was a special ward for the mentally sick and for some time the ruler used to visit the hospital and personally supervise its administration. The subsequent history of the hospital is poorly recorded, but it must have enjoyed support and funding from the Fāṭimid rulers. After Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, Saladin was the most enthusiastic founder of hospitals in Egypt. In all, he built three hospitals in Alexandria, Cairo and Fustāṭ, the largest being the Cairo hospital. It had three wards: for men, women and the mentally sick. The hospital was well stocked with medicines, physicians conducted two daily rounds and the ancillary staff carried out their orders. The hospital in Fustāṭ operated in the same way but was smaller. Other charitable institutions, if they existed, are not referred to in the sources.⁶⁷

Charitable services were not necessarily dependent on formal institutions. Pious endowments were also set up to finance charitable services such as ransom of prisoners-of-war and distribution of food. Muslim rulers saw the release of Muslim prisoners held by Christian powers such as Byzantium and the kingdom of Jerusalem as their duty. During the fourth/tenth century, regular exchanges of captives took place between the ʿAbbāsids and the Byzantines, and Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid rulers stipulated the release of Muslim prisoners as part of the agreements they signed with Byzantium. Saladin liberated many thousands of Muslim prisoners in the towns he conquered from the Franks after Ḥaṭṭīn and, in Jerusalem, set free 3,000 captives, whom he provided with clothes. Individuals were also involved in the ransom of captives and Abū Bakr al-Mādhārāʾī, for example, paid for the ransom of captured Muslims who were brought for ransom to Alexandria in 343/954. Qāḍī al-Fāḍil went a step further and set up a special pious endowment for the

ransom of captives. He dedicated to that purpose the revenues of a caravan-serai that he owned in Cairo.⁶⁸

Under medieval conditions, feeding the poor and providing water for the public were the two most essential social services that charitable people could and did provide. A prophetic tradition says that 'offering water is a charity that brings the greatest reward'. Fittingly one of the oldest known water supply projects is the well constructed in Fustāṭ by the vizier Ja'far ibn Faḍl during the mid-fourth/tenth century. The whole project, which involved a well and seven cisterns, was endowed for public use and is known from an inscription quoted in late literary sources. Food distributions were provided by some of the top-ranking Fāṭimid courtiers and *amīrs*. Shaqīq al-Mulk, for example, was a eunuch of the Fāṭimid ruler al-Ḥāfiẓ (r. 525–44/1130–9) and his Treasurer. He used to distribute food according to a list he had prepared among the people who lived in the Qarāfa cemetery and Muqattam Hill. Even more impressive were the food distributions of Ḥusām al-Dīn Lu'lu', a former Fāṭimid *amīr* and Saladin's admiral. Every day he distributed cooked food and 12,000 loaves of bread in the Qarāfa, supervising the entire operation personally.⁶⁹

The interplay between political, social and religious aspects of the support given by the state to the religious class and the poor is nicely illustrated by the Fāṭimid budget of 517/1123. In that year 468,790 dinars were spent on the army, military activities and the maintenance of the court. The internal breakdown of these expenses remains unknown, but the budgetary items are specified and these include payments for naval and land campaigns against the Franks, salaries to certain military corps, stocking the treasuries of the palace, meat for the palace kitchen, and clothes and goods for the court. In addition, there was expenditure on festivities and processions, including the distribution of charity and support for converts to Islam, payments for the hosting of foreign visitors to the court, the expenses for *dār al-tirāz* and *dār al-dībāj* (i.e. the production and storage of fabrics and garments used by the court) and payments for governors when they assumed new posts. Another 98,197 dinars were spent on military expeditions and the maintenance of border towns, while the fabulous sum of 767,294 dinars was allocated to cover the expenses of the court of the vizier al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī, this money being used to pay the vizier and his family and various groups of people employed at his court. It seems that the salaries amounted to 200,000 dinars annually and a certain sum (16,628 dinars) was dedicated for regular payments to very different groups of people: people of noble lineage and poor men and women and beggars.⁷⁰ The Fāṭimid practice of state-sponsored charity to selected groups of the poor went back to Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj al-Ikhshīd (323–34/935–46),

the semi-independent ruler of Egypt, who was the first to pay them *rawātib*. Usually, this term refers to salaries paid to state employees, but in this context it must be understood as meaning state charity paid on a regular basis. During the rule of Kāfūr (355–7/966–8), these payments rose to the fabulous, apparently exaggerated, sum of 500,000 dinars.⁷¹ Saladin's budget of 517/1181 comprised two types of payments: to the army and to *qāḍīs*, jurists and mystics. *Qāḍīs* were state employees, who received monthly salaries, but other jurists and mystics received, it seems, payments from the state without being formal state employees. Many jurists and mystics were affiliated with *waqf*-supported law colleges and lodges for mystics and, it would appear, did not need direct state support. Saladin's budget nicely illustrates the nature of medieval Islamic charity which, being either state sponsored or given by individuals, preferred the learned and mystics over the poor. The same is true for *waqf*-supported institutions: the vast majority of these were founded to maintain learning and the mystics rather than for charitable causes.

The wider context against which the question of *ṣadaqa* and *waqf* must be examined is that of the Islamic state and its obligations, or lack of obligations, to its subjects. S. D. Goitein, for instance, has characterised medieval Islamic states as indifferent to the needs of the 'faltering individual'.⁷² As a broad generalisation, this reflects Islamic medieval realities well. However, Muslim rulers did support the religious class and occasionally distributed charity to the poor. In the specific cases of the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid rulers of Egypt, they used the wealth of the country to buttress their rule through maintaining army and court. But they also used it to uphold Islamic values and, to a certain extent, to diffuse social tension and relieve social misery.

Conclusions

The Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid rulers left a permanent imprint on Egypt. The most lasting Fāṭimid contribution to the medieval history of Egypt was the integration of Egypt into the Mediterranean trading system and linking it with the Indian Ocean trade. The Fāṭimids also built Cairo, but the Ayyūbids endowed it with Sunnī institutions. The Sunnī character of Egypt was shaped by Saladin and the Ayyūbids while Ismā'īlism remained only a transient episode in the history of Muslim Egypt. The shaping of the Islamic Sunnī identity of Egypt under the Ayyūbids did not mean that a full Islamisation of the population was achieved. This happened only in the Mamlūk period.

II *Fāṭimids, 297–567/909–1171*

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- 1 297/909 ‘Abd Allāh (‘Ubayd Allāh) ibn Ḥusayn, Abū Muḥammad al-Mahdī
- 2 322/934 Muḥammad, Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Qā’im (son of 1?)
- 3 334/946 Ismā‘īl, Abū Ṭāhir al-Manṣūr (son of 2)
- 4 341/953 Ma‘add, Abū Tamīm al-Mu‘izz (son of 3)
- 358/969 Caliphs in Egypt
- 5 365/975 Nizār, Abū Manṣūr al-‘Azīz (son of 4)
- 6 386/996 al-Manṣūr, Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥākim (son of 5)
- 7 411/1021 ‘Alī, Abū ‘l-Ḥasan al-Zāhir (son of 6)
- 8 427/1036 Ma‘add, Abū Tamīm al-Mustaṣir (son of 7)
- 9 487/1094 Aḥmad, Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Musta‘lī (son of 8)
- 10 495/1101 al-Manṣūr, Abū ‘Alī al-Āmir (son of 9)
- 524/1130 Interregnum; rule by al-Ḥāfiẓ as regent but not yet as caliph; coins were issued in the name of al-Muntaẓar (the Expected One)
- 11 525/1131 ‘Abd al-Majīd ibn Muḥammad, Abū ‘l-Maymūn al-Ḥāfiẓ
- 12 544/1149 Ismā‘īl, Abū al-Manṣūr al-Zāfir (son of 11)
- 13 549/1154 ‘Īsā, Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Fā’iz (son of 12)
- 14 555–67/ ‘Abd Allah ibn Yūsuf, Abū Muḥammad al-‘Āḍid
- 1160–71 Ayyūbid conquest
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Notes

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Chronology

336/948	Kalbid rule begins in Sicily.
359/970	The Fāṭimids establish their capital in Cairo. The Zīrids rule in their name in Ifrīqiya.
361/972	The Fāṭimids leave for Egypt.
400/1009	Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem during the reign of the Fāṭimid caliph al Ḥākim.
401/1010	The ruling Sharīf in Mecca proclaims himself caliph. In Yemen al Ḥusayn ibn al Qāsim al ‘Iyānī claims to be the rightful imam and the <i>mahdī</i> .
405/1014 15	The Zīrid Ḥammād recognises the ‘Abbāsid caliphate.
406 7/1015 17	Massacre of Shī‘īs in Tunis and Qayrawān.
411/1021	Death of the Fāṭimid caliph al Ḥākim.
414 15/1024 5	Famine in Egypt.
416/1025	Beginnings of the Mirdāsīd dynasty (northern Syria and the middle Euphrates area). Byzantine landing at Messina.
422/1031	Abolishment of the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba.
425/1034	Peace between the Kalbids of Sicily and the Byzantines.
426 40/1035 48	Beginnings of the Almoravid movement.
431/1040	The Saljuq Turks defeat the Ghaznavids at Dandānqān.
440/1048 9	The Zīrids recognise the ‘Abbāsid caliphate and renounce allegiance to the Fāṭimids.
443/1051	The <i>amīr</i> of the Banū Qurra in Barqa (Cyrenaica) denounces the Fāṭimids and offers his allegiance to the Zīrid al Mu‘izz.
443/1052	The Arab Banū Hilāl after entering Ifrīqiya from Fāṭimid Egypt defeat the Zīrids at Ḥaydarān.

446/1054	5	The Zīrid al Mu‘izz returns to Fāṭimid allegiance.
450/1058		Death of al Māwardī, author of an influential work on Islamic political thought (<i>al Aḥkām al sulṭāniyya</i>).
451/1059		Death of Ibn Yāsīn, founder of the Almoravid movement.
453/1061		The Normans commanded by Roger cross into Sicily.
454/1062		Death of the Zīrid al Mu‘izz.
455/1063		Al Ṣulayḥī rules over wide parts of Yemen in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph. A pro Fāṭimid reign is installed in Mecca.
456/1064		Death of the Zāhirī jurist and theologian Ibn Ḥazm in al Andalus.
457/1064		The Saljuq Alp Arslān invades Georgia and takes the Armenian towns of Ani and Kars.
459/1066		Massacre of Jews in Zīrid Granada.
463/1070		Founding of Marrakesh by the Almoravids.
463/1071		The Saljuqs defeat the Byzantines at Manzikert.
464/1072		Norman conquest of Palermo.
466/1073		The Armenian Badr al Jamālī intervenes in Fāṭimid Egypt, beginning of military rule.
467/1075		Sulaymān ibn Qutulmish seizes Nicaea and founds the Saljuq sultanate of Anatolia.
469	70/1077	Norman conquest of Val di Mazara in Sicily.
478/1085		Christian conquest of Toledo.
479/1086		The Almoravids defeat the Christians at the battle of Zallāqa.
484/1091		Completion of Norman conquest of Sicily (started in 453/1061).
485/1092		Assassination of the Saljuq vizier Nizām al Mulk.
487/1094		The Fāṭimid caliph al Mustanṣir dies. Disagreement over his succession brings about the emergence of the Nizārīs, a branch of the Ismā‘īlīs. El Cid conquers Valencia.
489/1096		Qılıj Arslān annihilates the People’s Crusade of Peter the Hermit after it crossed the Bosphorus from Constantinople. The Hilalian Banū Jāmi‘ establish their rule in Gabes.
490/1098		The Crusaders conquer Antioch.
492/1099		The Crusaders conquer Jerusalem.

494/II00	Baldwin of Edessa has himself crowned king of Jerusalem.
497/II04	Acre conquered by the Crusaders.
502/II09	Tripoli conquered by the Crusaders.
503/II09	In Cordoba, burning of the works by al Ghazālī, author of <i>Iḥyā' 'ulūm al dīn</i> ('The revival of religious sciences').
505/IIII	Death of al Ghazālī.
5II/II19	Ibn Tūmart, the founder of the Almohad movement, arrives at Bougie.
512/II19	Christian armies reach the banks of the Ebro river in the Iberian Peninsula.
515/II21	The Fāṭimid caliph al Āmir puts an end to al Afḍal's military rule. Ibn Tūmart is proclaimed <i>mahdī</i> .
517/II23	The Fāṭimids invade Palestine and are defeated by the Crusaders at the battle of Yabne (Ibelin).
518/II24	Tyre conquered by the Franks. Ibn Tūmart and his followers move to Tinmal.
524/II30	Assassination of the Fāṭimid caliph al Āmir. Attack of the Almohads against Marrakesh (battle of Buḥayra). Death of Ibn Tūmart.
527/II33	'Abd al Mu'min is proclaimed Ibn Tūmart's successor.
529/II35	The Normans of Sicily, under Roger II, occupy the isle of Djerba. Norman presence in the Ifrīqiyan coast lasts until 555/II60, being brought to an end by the Almohads.
535/II40f.	The Almohads complete the conquest of the Sūs. Andalusī revolts against the Almoravids.
539/II44	Zangi takes Edessa from the Franks. The Sufi Ibn Qasī rules in the Algarve (southern Portugal).
539/II45	Death of Reverter, the commander of the Almoravid Christian mercenaries.
540/II46	Fez conquered by the Almohads. Friday sermon delivered in the name of the Almohads in Cadiz. Ibn Hūd defeated and killed by the Christians in al Andalus.
541/II46	Death of Zangi.
541/II47	Almohad conquest of Marrakesh, capital of the Almoravid empire. Lisbon conquered by Crusaders travelling to Jerusalem (542/II47). Almohad troops

	cross the Straits and take possession of the Algarve and Seville.
542/1147	Almería conquered by the Christians with Genoese help.
542 5/1147 50	The rebellion of al Massī crushed by the Almohads.
543/1148	Second Crusade. Norman conquest of al Mahdiyya. The Ebro valley is completely lost to the Christians.
544/1149	Nūr al Dīn wins the battle of Inab where Raymond of Antioch is killed. Death of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, author of a popular book on the Prophet Muḥammad. Great 'purge' (<i>i'tirāf</i>) of the Almohads.
546/1151	The rulers of the western regions of al Andalus cross the Straits to pledge obedience to the Almohad caliph 'Abd al Mu'min.
547/1152	Algiers, Bougie, the Qal'a of the Banū Ḥammād and Constantine conquered by the Almohads.
548/1153	'Abd al Mu'min crushes the tribes of the Banū Hilāl at Setif. Ascalon conquered by Baldwin III.
549/1154	Nūr al Dīn conquers Damascus and makes it his capital.
552/1157	The pledge of obedience of the original Almohad tribes is renewed and the caliph visits Tinmal. Almería conquered by the Almohads.
554 5/1159 60	Almohad conquest of Ifrīqiya, including al Mahdiyya, Sfax and Tripoli.
556/1161	Defeat of the Arab tribes by the Almohads in al Qarn near Qayrawān.
560 2/1165 6	The Almohads fight and defeat Mazīzdag al Ghumārī and his son.
560 5/1164 9	Frankish invasions of Egypt.
560/1165	The Jewish thinker Maimonides, escaping Almohad persecution, arrives in Egypt.
561/1166	Death of the Sufi 'Abd al Qādir al Jilānī.
563/1168	The Almohad Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf takes the caliphal title.
564/1169	Ibn Mardanīsh, ruler of the Levant in al Andalus, is abandoned by Ibn Hamushk.
567/1171	Saladin puts an end to the Fātimid caliphate. Acknowledgement of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Egypt.

- The Almohad caliph crosses to al Andalus with an army including Arabs from Ifrīqiya and raids are made in the area of Toledo.
- 567/1172 Death of Ibn Mardānīsh.
- 569/1174 Ayyūbid invasion of Yemen. The Normans of Sicily attack Alexandria. Death of Nūr al Dīn and Amalric. Giraldo Sem Pavor defects to the Almohads, serving them in the Maghrib where he dies.
- 571/1176 Death of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar Īntī, the last of Ibn Tūmart’s companions and eponym of the Ḥafṣids.
- 572/1176 Qilij Arslān defeats Manuel Comnenus at Myriocephalon ending Byzantine hope of retaking Anatolia.
- 573/1178 The king of Portugal raids the areas of Beja and Seville.
- 575 6/1180 I The Almohad caliph leads a successful expedition against Gafsa.
- 578/1182 Alfonso VIII of Castile camps in front of Cordoba and his raids reach Algeciras near the sea. Death of the Sufi Aḥmad al Rifā‘ī.
- 580/1184 The Almoravid ‘Alī ibn Ghāniya occupies Bougie, Algiers and Milyāna.
- 582/1186 The Almoravid ‘Alī ibn Ghāniya occupies the oasis of Tawzar and Gafsa and joins forces with the governor of Tripoli, the Armenian Qarāqūsh. The Almohad caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb launches an expedition against Ifrīqiya.
- 583/1187 Saladin’s victory over the Crusaders at Ḥiṭṭīn is followed by the Muslim conquest of Acre and Jerusalem. Dinar issued by Saladin in Damascus to celebrate the victory over the Franks.
- 585/1189 Third Crusade.
- 586/1190 An ambassador sent by Saladin asks the Almohad caliph to help halt the Crusaders in the east with his fleet.
- 587/1191 Acre conquered by the Crusaders. The Sufi al Suhrawardī executed in Aleppo on Saladin’s orders.
- 589/1193 Death of Saladin.
- 591/1195 The Almohad army defeats Alfonso VIII at Alarcos.
- 595/1198 Death of the philosopher Averroes.

595 7/1198 1200	Famine in Egypt.
599/1203	The Almohads take the Balearic Islands from the Almoravid Banū Ghāniya.
600/1204	Capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade. Byzantine rule reduced to the region around Nicaea and the principality of Trebizond.
603/1207	Kaykhusraw I captures Antalya on the Mediterranean.
609/1212	The Almohad caliph al Nāṣir is defeated by the Christians at Las Navas de Tolosa (al 'Iqāb).
610/1213	Beginning of the rise of the Marīnids.
611/1214	Kaykā'ūs I captures Sinop on the Black Sea.
614 18/1217 21	Fifth Crusade.
616/1219	Crusaders' conquest of Damietta.
618/1221	The Crusaders leave Egypt.
621 44/1224 46	Deportation of the Muslims of the Val di Mazara to Lucera in Apulia.
625/1228	Ibn Hūd al Judhāmī rebels against the Almohads in al Andalus. The caliph al Ma'mūn crosses the Straits to depose Yahyā al Mu'taṣim in Marrakesh.
626/1228f.	Sixth Crusade. The Crusaders recapture Jerusalem. End of Ayyūbid rule and beginning of Rasūlid rule in Yemen.
627/1229	Beginning of the Ḥafṣid dynasty in Ifrīqiya.
627/1230	Kaykubād I defeats the Khwāraz Shāh at Yassi Chimen.
628/1231	Majorca conquered by the Aragonese.
633/1236	Christian conquest of Cordoba. The Mongols invade Georgia.
635/1238	Christian conquest of Valencia.
638/1240	Death of the Sufi Muḥyī 'l Dīn ibn al 'Arabī. Rebellion of Bābā Ishāq. The Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb takes actions against the <i>amīrs</i> of the Ashrafiyya and deprives them of their <i>iqṭā's</i> .
641/1243	The Mongol Ilkhans annihilate the Saljuq army at Köse Dağ east of Sivas.
642/1244	The Khwarizmians take back Jerusalem from the Franks.
643/1246	Treaty of Jaén: the Naṣrid sultan surrenders Granada to the king of Castile and León and agrees to become

- his vassal. Nomination of a Franciscan friar as bishop in Marrakesh to cater for the needs of the Christian mercenaries.
- 645/1248 The Almohad caliph al Saʿīd attempts to regain control of the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya, but is defeated by the ʿAbd al Wādid ruler of Tlemcen.
- 646/1248 Seventh Crusade. Conquest of Seville and Jaén by Fernando III of Castile.
- 647/1249 The Crusaders take Damietta.
- 648/1250 Mamlūks' victory over the Franks at al Maṣṣūra. End of Ayyūbid dynasty. First official celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (*mawlid al nabī*) in ʿAzafid Ceuta.
- 648/1251 Beginning of the Turkish Mamlūk sultanate in Egypt.
- 650/1253 The Ḥafṣid ruler proclaims himself *amīr al mu'minīn* with the caliphal title of al Mustanṣir.
- 654/1256 The Mongols invade Anatolia again.
- 656/1258 The Mongols under Hülegü sack Baghdad. Death of the Maghribi Sufi al Shādhilī.
- 657/1259 The Sharīfs of Mecca acknowledge the Ḥafṣid caliphate.
- 658/1260 Mamlūk victory over the Mongols at the battle of ʿAyn Jālūt. The Ḥafṣid al Mustanṣir orders the execution of his chancery chief, the Andalusī man of letters Ibn al Abbār.
- 659/1260 Alfonso X of Castile attacks the port of Salé.
- 659/1261 The Mamlūk ruler Baybars installs an ʿAbbāsīd caliph in Cairo with the regnal title al Mustanṣir. The ʿAbbāsīd caliph appoints Baybars as sultan. Celebration of *mawlid al nabī* in Egypt. Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–82) recaptures Constantinople from the Latins.
- 660/1262 Marrakesh attacked by the Marīnids.
- 662/1263 Commercial agreement between Mamlūk Egypt and Aragón.
- 663/1264 Mudejar revolt in the Iberian Peninsula.
- 663/1264 Baybars receives a delegation from Charles of Anjou which signifies European recognition of the Mamlūk sultanate as a great power in the Middle East and

- signals the weakening of European support of the Crusaders.
- 663/1265 The Mamlūk ruler Baybars grants representation to the four Sunnī schools of law.
- 668/1269 Marīnid conquest of Marrakesh. End of the Almohad caliphate.
- 670/1271 Lord Edward, son of King Henry III of England, leads a Crusader force to Acre and gains limited cooperation with the Ilkhanid Mongols. Extirpation of the Assassins in their fortresses in northern Syria. Baybars conquers Antioch from Bohemond VI.
- 672/1273 Death of the Sufi Jalāl al Dīn al Rūmī.
- 673/1274 Marīnid conquest of Sijilmāsa. Firearms used for the first time in the Maghrib.
- 674/1275 Marīnid foundation of Fās al Jadīd (New Fez). Massacre of Jews. The Almohad shaykhs who resist in Tinmal are decapitated.
- 675/1276 First Marīnid *madrassa*. Death of the Ḥafṣid caliph al Mustanṣir and beginning of a lengthy period (675 718/1277 1318) of upheaval in Ifrīqiya.
- 675/1277 Baybars invades eastern Anatolia and defeats an Ilkhanid army near Elbistan.
- 680/1281 The Ilkhanid army is routed by the Mamlūks near Ḥimṣ.
- 681/1282 Death of Ibn Khallikān, author of a biographical dictionary of persons who for some reason or other had gained fame.
- 684/1285 Qalāwūn's truce with Leon II guarantees an annual tribute and secures the safe passage of slave imports from the Golden Horde to Egypt through Armenian land.
- 688/1289 Mamlūk conquest of Tripoli from the Crusaders.
- 689/1290 Mamlūk capture of Acre that brings the Crusader presence in the Levant to an end.
- 691/1292 Marīnid institutionalisation of the *mawlid al nabī* as an official festival.
- 700/1301 Unprecedented discriminatory policy against the Copts.
- 704/1304 First Marīnid organised pilgrimage to Mecca.

709/1309	Death of the Sufi Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, author of a breviary which acquired enormous popularity.
715/1315	Egypt's land survey.
721/1321	Anti Christian riots in Egypt.
723/1323	Peace treaty between the Mamlūks and the Mongol Ilkhans.
c. 724/1324	Death of 'Othmān (Osman), the eponym of the Ottomans.
725/1325	Failure of the Mamlūk attempt to expand sphere of influence to Yemen.
726/1326	The Ottomans take Brusa.
728/1328	Death of the jurist and theologian Ibn Taymiyya.
731/1331	The <i>beglik</i> of Monteshe concludes a treaty with Venice. Fall of İznik (Nicaea) into Ottoman hands.
741/1340	Marīnid defeat at Río Salado (Iberian Peninsula) by Christian troops.
748 50/1348 50	Black Death. Cairo loses approximately 40 per cent of its population. Marīnid occupation of Ḥafṣid Tunis. The Ottomans plunder the plains near Thessaloniki.
753/1352	The traveller and scholar Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visits Mali.
755/1354	Attacks against the Copts in Egypt leading to conversions to Islam. A great earthquake destroys the walls of Gallipoli and other towns in the area which are swiftly occupied by the Ottomans. The Genoese Filippo Doria takes possession of Tripoli and sells it to Aḥmad Makkī, who recognises the sovereignty of the Marīnid sultans until 766/1364f.
758/1357	Ḥafṣid Tunis occupied by the Marīnids (second time).
770/1368	Death of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.
773/1369	The Ottoman sultan Murād I takes Edirne (Adrianople).
777/1375	The <i>beglik</i> of Germiyān passes to the Ottomans. Cilician Armenia becomes a vassalage of the Mamlūk sultanate.
784/1382	Restoration of the non dynastic Mamlūk sultanate, with a move from a Turkish to a Circassian sultanate.
788/1386 7	The Ottoman sultan Murād I defeats Qaramān near Konya. The Ottomans take Thessaloniki.
789/1387	Trade treaty between the Genoese and the Ottomans.

791/1389	Battle of Kosovo. The Ottoman sultan Murād and the Serbian leader Lazar lose their lives.
795/1392	King Martino of Sicily (Aragonese) takes possession of Djerba (until 801/1398).
796/1394	The Ottomans lay siege to the Byzantine capital Constantinople.
798/1396	Battle of Nikopolis, defeat of King Sigismund of Hungary at the hands of the Ottomans.
799/1397	Bāyezīd I attacks Qaramān.
803/1400	Timur Leng invades Syria. Aleppo and Damascus are sacked.
804/1402	Timur Leng defeats the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd I in Ankara.
807/1405	Death of Timur Leng.
808/1406	Death of Ibn Khaldūn.
811/1408	The Mamlūks appoint the ruler of Mecca vice sultan of the Ḥijāz.
818/1415	Ceuta is conquered by the Portuguese. Grain riots in the Mamlūk sultanate.
819/1416	Revolt of Börklüje Muṣṭafā near Izmir.
820/1417	Ottoman forces invade Albania and gain access to the Adriatic Sea.
821/1418	Death of al Qalqashandī, author of a famous secretarial manual and encyclopaedia.
823/1420	Meḥmed I takes the Genoese colony of Samsun.
824/1421	Grain riots in the Mamlūk sultanate. Death of the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed I.
833 4/1430	Thessaloniki and Ioannina fall under direct Ottoman rule.
840/1437	'Discovery' of the grave of Idrīs II in Fez that supported Sharīfism.
842 3/1438 9	Direct Ottoman rule over northern Serbia.
845/1442	Death of the Egyptian historian al Maqrīzī.
848/1444	Treaty of Edirne concluded between the Ottomans and Vladislav, Branković and Hunyadi. Battle of Varna between the Ottomans and Hungary with Ottoman victory.
857/1453	Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.

858/1454	End of the Rasūlids and rise of the Ṭāhirids in Yemen.
868/1464	Meḥmed the Conqueror resumes Ottoman expansion in Anatolia.
869/1465	Revolution in Fez and execution of the last Marīnid sultan by the <i>sharīfs</i> of Fez. The Portuguese take al Qaşr al Şaghīr.
872/1468f.	Timbuktu taken by the Songhay king Sunni ‘Alī Beri.
874/1470	Qaramān is formally annexed by the Ottomans.
875/1471	The Portuguese take Tangier.
894/1489	Ottomans defeated by the Mamlūks at the battle of Agha Çayiri.
896/1491	Peace treaty between Ottomans and Mamlūks.
897/1492	Christian conquest of Granada. Forced conversion of the Jews of Spain. ‘Discovery’ of America.
898/1493	Askīyā Muḥammad’s coup d’état against Sunni ‘Alī in Songhay.
903/1497	Spanish conquest of Melilla. The Portuguese irrupt into the Indian Ocean world.
906 7/1501	Ismā‘īl Shāh, the Safavid ruler, makes Twelver Shī‘ism the state religion. Muslim ships are sunk off Calicut in Kerala.
909/1503	A Portuguese squadron cruises at the entrance to the Red Sea.
910/1504	The Barbarossa brothers (Oruj and Khayreddīn) make La Goulette a base port for their activities.
911/1505	Death of the religious scholar and polygraph al Suyūṭī.
911 17/1505 II	Spain occupies the major points on the Mediterranean coast in Ifrīqiya.
914/1508	The Mamlūk sultan al Ghawrī begins establishing an artillery corps to face European (Portuguese) expansion. Oran is taken by Spain.
915/1510	The Moroccan <i>sharīf</i> Muḥammad al Qā’im emerges as the <i>mahdī</i> destined to revive the fortunes of Islam. Spain takes Tripoli.
916/1510	The Ḥafṣid sultan gives the Barbarossa brothers permission to establish a secondary base in Djerba. Tripoli and Bougie are occupied by the Spaniards. Algiers agrees to pay tribute to Spain.

917/1511	The Ottoman prince Qorqud faces a rebellion in south western Anatolia led by Shāh Qulu ('Slave of the Shāh'). A corps of harquebusiers is recruited from outside the <i>mamlūks</i> ' cadres. The king of Tlemcen accepts Spanish sovereignty.
920/1514	The Ottoman sultan Selīm I routs the Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl at Chaldiran. Oruj Barbarossa attempts to retake Bougie from the Spaniards.
921/1515	Before this year Leo Africanus visited Timbuktu.
922/1516	Selīm I defeats the Mamlūk sultan at Marj Dābiq. Ottoman conquest of Aleppo and Damascus. The Barbarossa brothers occupy Algiers.
923/1517	Ottoman conquest of Cairo and end of Mamlūk sultanate. End of the Tāhirid sultanate in Yemen.
924/1518	Oruj Barbarossa is killed.
925/1519	Charles V is elected Holy Roman Emperor.
926/1519	Khayreddīn Barbarossa presents the Ottoman sultan Selīm I with the newly acquired territories in North Africa.
926/1520	Süleymān I the Magnificent becomes the Ottoman sultan. He would later claim the title of caliph. Mamlūk revolt in Syria against the Ottomans.
929/1522	Khayreddīn Barbarossa takes Bone and Constantine. Conquest of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible.
932/1525 6	Ottoman invasion of Hungary: Süleymān defeats and kills King Lajos at the battle of Mohács. Khayreddīn Barbarossa takes Algiers.
935/1529	First siege of Vienna.
939/1532	Khayreddīn Barbarossa forces the king of Tlemcen to pay tribute.
940/1533	Süleymān appoints Khayreddīn Barbarossa commander in chief of the Ottoman fleet.
941/1534	Ottoman conquest of Baghdad. Khayreddīn Barbarossa seizes Tunis and expels the Ḥafṣid sultan.
941/1535	Charles V leads an expedition against Tunis and restores the Ḥafṣid sultan. The corsairs call in Ottoman help.

- 942 3/1536 Süleymân and the king of France Francis I form an alliance.
- 945/1538 Ottoman invasion of Yemen. The Ottoman fleet besieges unsuccessfully the Portuguese fort of Diu in Gujarat.
- 948/1541 Ottoman conquests in Hungary. Charles V leads an unsuccessful naval expedition against Algiers.
- 949/1542 Ferdinand besieges Buda unsuccessfully.
- 951/1544 The corsair ʿTurghūd briefly occupies al Mahdiyya, being dislodged by the Spaniards.
- 954/1547 Truce between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. The Zayyānīd king of Tlemcen asks for the protection of Spain, but it is eventually incorporated into the Ottoman 'regency of Algiers'.
- 955/1548 Ottoman campaign against the Safavids.
- 957/1550 The Sa'dī Muḥammad al Mahdī takes Fez.
- 958/1551 Tripoli and Tlemcen fall to the Ottomans.
- 959/1552 Failed Ottoman attempt to conquer Hormuz.
- 961/1554 Muḥammad al Shaykh al Sa'dī conquers Fez a second time and eliminates the Waṭṭāsīd dynasty.
- 962/1555 Treaty establishing the borders between the Safavid and Ottoman empires. The Ottomans establish the province of Ethiopia, on the African Red Sea littoral (capital, Massawa).
- 963/1555 Bougie is taken from Spain. ʿTurghūd obtains the governorship of Tripolitania.
- 965/1558 Qayrawān submits to ʿTurghūd.
- 972f./1565 Failure of Ottoman siege of Malta.
- 974/1566 Death of Süleymân the Magnificent.
- 974/1567 Spanish attempt to conquer Algiers. The Ottomans lose Yemen.
- 976/1568 Ottoman failed plan for the construction of a canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.
- 976 8/1568 70 Great Morisco rebellion in Granada. Ottoman reconquest of Yemen.
- 977/1569 The kingdom of Tunis incorporated into the Ottoman empire. Failed Ottoman attack against Astrakhan.
- 979/1571 The allied fleet of Venice, Spain, the Knights of St John and the Pope destroy much of the Ottoman fleet off Naupaktos (Lepanto) in the Gulf of Corinth.

980 2/1572 4	Great epidemic at Algiers.
981/1573	Tunis is retaken by the Spaniards.
982/1574	The Ottomans take definitive control of Tunis.
986/1578	Defeat of the Portuguese at Wādī al Makhāzin and death of Don Sebastian.
986/1578	Ottoman Safavid war.
989/1581	The British Levant Company is granted the monopoly to trade in the Ottoman empire.
993/1585	The corsair Murād Ra'īs ventures into the Atlantic and plunders the Canary Islands.
996/1587	The <i>beglerbegis</i> of Algiers are replaced by pashas appointed for a term of three years. This system lasts until 1070/1659.
996/1588	Death of the Ottoman architect Sinān. Defeat of the Spanish Armada by Elizabethan England.
999/1591	Moroccan conquest of Timbuktu.
1001 15/1593 1606	Ottoman 'Long War' with the Habsburgs.
1002/1593	The scholar Aḥmad Bābā al Tinbukṭī, who resisted the Sa'dī conquest of his land, is arrested by the Moroccans.
1004 7/1595 8	One of the deys (Ottoman officers), 'Othmān, sets up a kind of principality in Tunisia.
1005/1596	Rebellion of Qara Yaziji in Anatolia. Ottoman victory of Mezökeretes/Haçova against the Habsburgs.
1017 23/1609 14	Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain.
1018/1610	Larache passes to Christian hands. The French destroy the major part of the Tunisian fleet in La Goulette.
1032/1622	Treaty between England and Algiers.
1034/1624	The Dutch threaten Algiers.
1035/1626	Treaty between the Dutch and Algiers.
1036/1627	Death of Aḥmad Bābā al Timbukṭī.
1037/1627	Pirates from Algiers sack the coast of Iceland.
1038/1628	Treaty between France and Algiers.
1041/1631	Corsairs from Algiers reach England.
1049/1639	Treaty of Qaṣ ı Shīrīn.
1055 80/1645 9	Ottoman conquest of Crete.
1076/1665	Siege of Malta from Tripoli.
1666 CE	Messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi.
1084/1673	Murād II establishes a hereditary monarchy in Tunisia.

1094/1683	Second siege of Vienna.
1110/1699	Peace treaty of Karlowitz.
1118/1706	Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī establishes himself as the monarch in Tunis.
1120/1708	The Spaniards are dislodged from Oran.
1123/1711	Ḥamīd Qaramanlī takes power in Tripoli.
1126 31/1714 18	Ottoman Habsburg Venetian war.
1130/1718	Peace treaty of Passarowitz.
1132 4/1720 1	Embassy of Yirmisekiz Meḥmed Chelebi to France.
1182/1768	Ottoman declaration of war against Russia after Poland’s partition.
1182/1769	The ‘Alawī sultan Sīdī Muḥammad takes Mazagan (al Jadīda), ending more than 250 years of Portuguese control.
1183/1770	A Russian naval detachment lands in Mora and destroys the Ottoman fleet before the Anatolian port of Cheshme.
1188/1774	Peace of Küchük Kaynarja between Ottomans and Russians.
1197/1783	Annexation of Crimea by Russia.
1203/1789	Selīm III becomes the Ottoman sultan and begins period of reforms.
1204/1789	The Ottoman government pressures the saint Sīdī Aḥmad al Tijānī to leave his <i>zāwiya</i> in ‘Ayn Mādī to go and live in Fez.
1205/1790	Algiers can only arm four ships. Decline of piracy in the Mediterranean.
1218/1804	‘Uthmān dan Fodio’s <i>hijra</i> from Degel to Gudu.
1222/1807	Overthrow of Selīm III by janissary revolt.

Abbreviations

AA	<i>Al Andalus</i>
AI	<i>Annales Islamologiques</i>
<i>Annales ESC</i>	<i>Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations</i>
AQ	<i>Al Qanṭara</i>
BEO	<i>Bulletin d'Études Orientales</i>
BRIJMES	<i>British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae</i>
El2	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
IJAHS	<i>International Journal of African Historical Studies</i>
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
IJTS	<i>International Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
ILS	<i>Islamic Law and Society</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
JAH	<i>Journal of African History</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
MEAH	<i>Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos</i>
MSR	<i>Mamluk Studies Review</i>
MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph</i>
MW	<i>Muslim World</i>
RA	<i>Revue Africaine</i>

List of abbreviations

<i>REI</i>	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i>
<i>REMMM</i>	<i>Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>ROMM</i>	<i>Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>



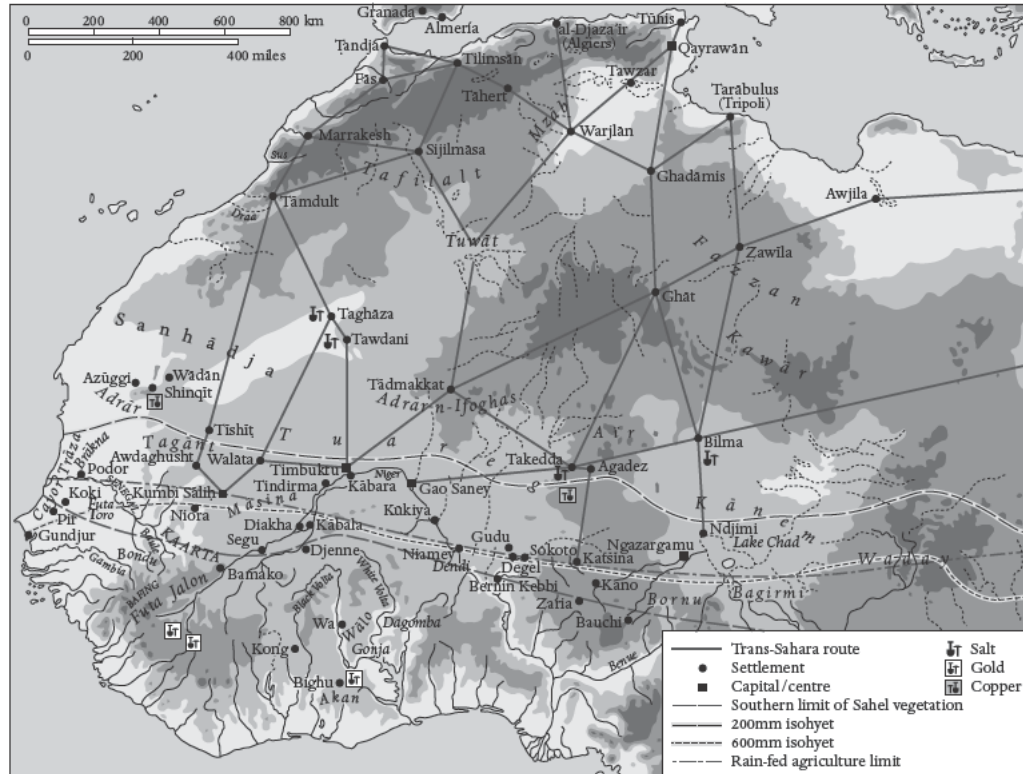
Map 1 The Taifa kingdoms



Map 2 The central lands of North Africa and Sicily



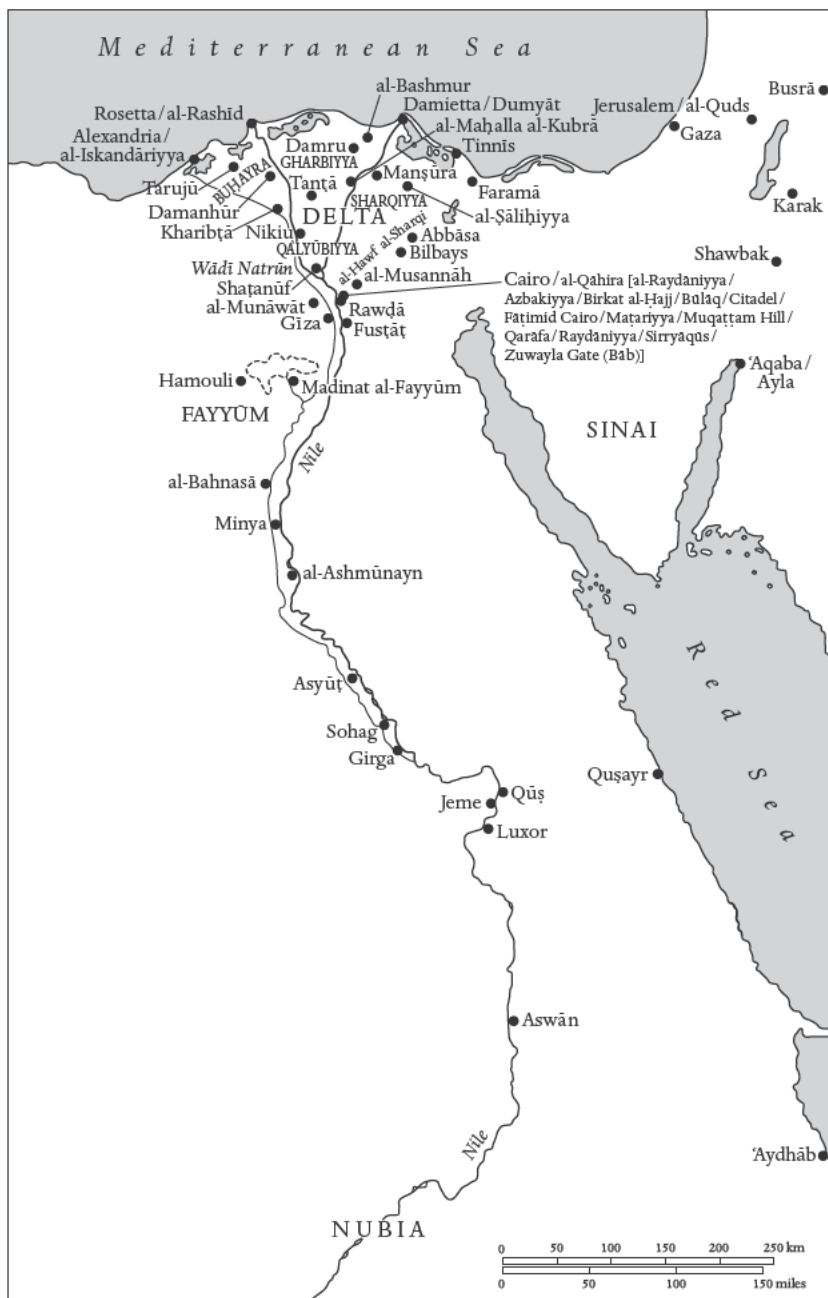
Map 3 The Almohad caliphate (sixth/twelfth century)



Map 4 West Africa



Map 5 The Ayyubid territories in 615/1218



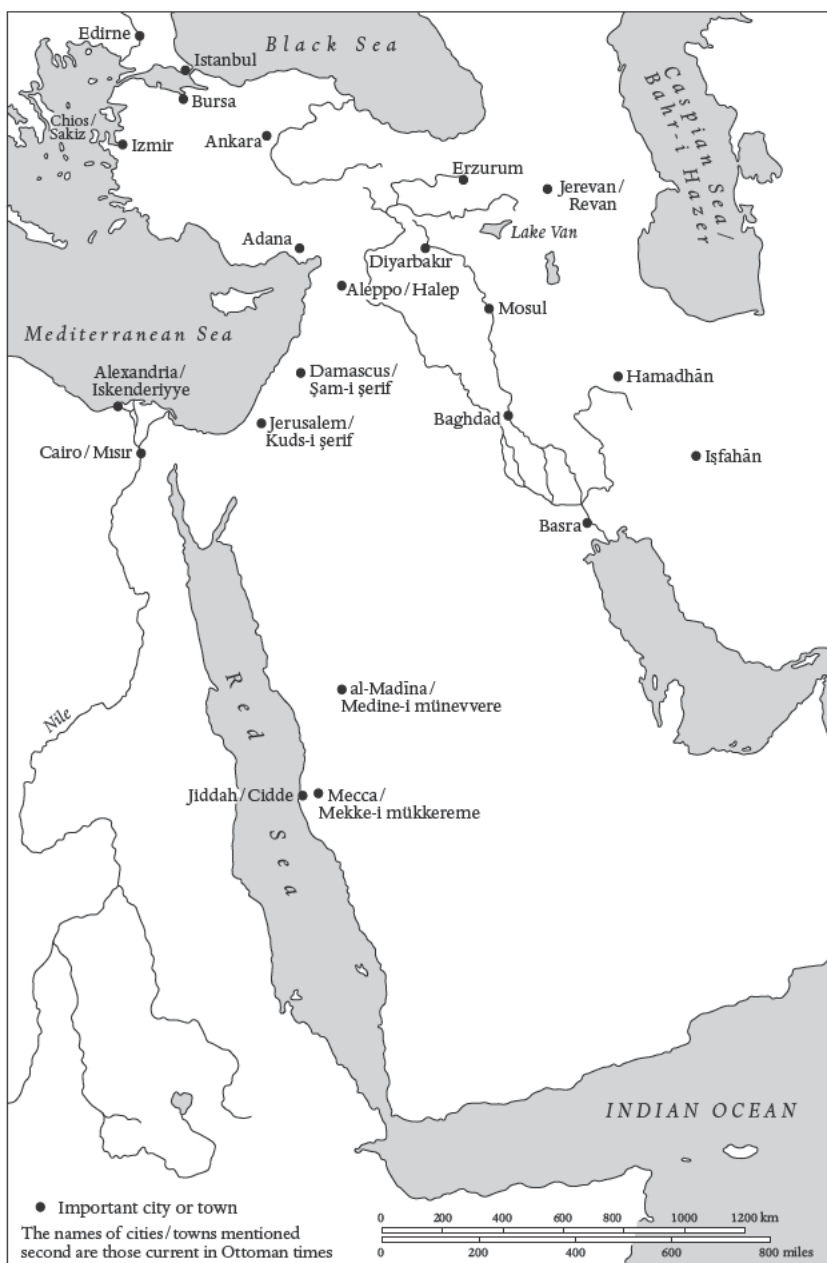
Map 6 Islamic (post conquest) Egypt



Map 7 The Turks in Anatolia before the Ottomans



Map 8 The Ottoman empire in 1566



Map 9 The Ottoman empire in Asia and Africa



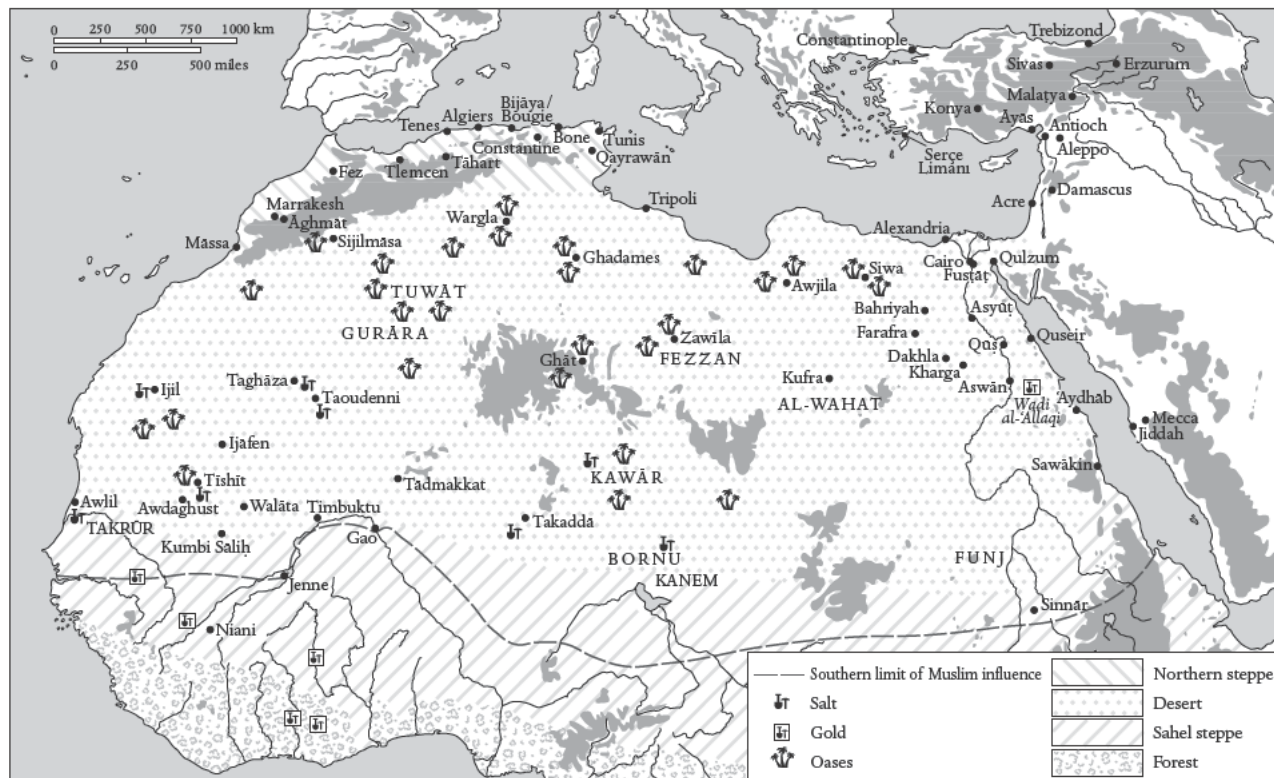
Map 10 The Red Sea region



Map 11 Sharifian rule in Morocco



Map 12 The western Mediterranean



Map 13 The western Islamic World

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Chapter 8: The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: the Turkish Mamlūk sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk sultanate (784–923/1382–1517)

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